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TORONTO

Comus

By
John Milton

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

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INTRODUCTION.

FEW poems have been more variously designated than *Comus*. Milton himself describes it simply as "A Mask", by others it has been criticised and estimated as a lyrical drama, a drama in the epic style, a lyric poem in the *form* of a play, a phantasy, an allegory, a philosophical poem, a suite of speeches or majestic soliloquies, and even a didactic poem. Such variety in the description of the poem is explained partly by its complex charm and many-sided interest, and partly by the desire to describe it from that point of view which should best reconcile its literary form with what we know of the genius and powers of its author. Those who, like Dr Johnson, have blamed it as a drama, have admired it "as a series of lines," or as a lyric, one writer, who has found that its characters are nothing, its sentiments tedious, its story uninteresting, has nevertheless "doubted whether there will ever be any similar poem which gives so true a conception of the capacity and the dignity of the mind by which it was produced" (Bagehot's *Literary Studies*). Some who have praised it as an allegory see in it a satire on the evils both of the Church and of the State, while others regard it as alluding to the vices of the Court alone. Some have found its lyrical parts the

best, while others, charmed with its "divine philosophy," have commended those deep conceits which place it alongside of the *Faerie Queen*, as shadowing forth an episode in the education of a noble soul and as a poet's lesson against intemperance and impurity. But no one can refuse to admit that, more than any other of Milton's shorter poems, it gives us an insight into the peculiar genius and character of its author. It was, in the opinion of Hallam, "sufficient to convince any one of taste and feeling that a great poet had arisen in England, and one partly formed in a different school from his contemporaries." It is true that in the early poems we do not find the whole of Milton, for he had yet to pass through many years of trouble and controversy, but *Comus*, in a special degree, reveals or foreshadows much of the Milton of *Paradise Lost*. Whether we regard its place in Milton's life, in the series of his works, or in English literature as a whole, the poem is full of significance. It is worth while, therefore, to consider how its form was determined by the external circumstances and previous training of the poet, by his favourite studies in poetry, philosophy, history, and music, and by his noble theory of life in general, and of a poet's life in particular.

The mask was represented at Ludlow Castle in September 29th, 1634, it was probably composed early in that year. It belongs, therefore, to that group of poems (*L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*) written by Milton while living in his father's house at Horton, near Windsor, after having left the University of Cambridge in July, 1632. As he was born in 1608, he would be twenty-five years of age when this poem was

composed During his stay at Horton (1632-39), which was broken only by a journey to Italy in 1638 9, he was chiefly occupied with the study of the Greek, Roman, Italian, and English literatures, each of which has left its impress on *Comus* He read widely and carefully, and it has been said that his great and original imagination was almost entirely nourished, or at least stimulated, by books his residence at Horton was, accordingly, pre-eminently what he intended it to be, and what his father wisely and gladly permitted it to be—a time of preparation and ripening for the work to which he had dedicated himself We are reminded of his own words in *Comus*

And Wisdom's self

Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to ruffled, and sometimes impaired

We find in *Comus* abundant reminiscences of Milton's study of the literature of antiquity "It would not be too much to say that the literature of antiquity was to Milton's genius what soil and light are to a plant It nourished, it coloured, it developed it It determined not merely his character as an artist, but it exercised an influence on his intellect and temper scarcely less powerful than hereditary instincts and contemporary history It at once animated and chastened his imagination, it modified his fancy, it furnished him with his models On it his taste was formed, on it his style was moulded From it his diction and his method derived

INTRODUCTION

their peculiarities. It transformed what would in all probability have been the mere counterpart of Caedmon's Paraphrase or Langland's Vision into Paradise Lost, and what would have been the mere counterpart of Corydon's Doleful Knell and the satire of the Three Estates, into Lycidas and Comus" (*Quarterly Review*, No 326)

But Milton has also told us that Spenser was his master, and the full charm of *Comus* cannot be realised without reference to the artistic and philosophical spirit of the author of the *Faerie Queene*. Both poems deal with the war between the body and the soul—between the lower and the higher nature. In an essay on 'Spenser as a philosophic poet,' De Vere says "The perils and degradations of an animalised life are shown under the allegory of Sir Guyon's sea voyage with its successive storms and whirlpools, its 'rock of Reproach' strewn with wrecks and dead men's bones, its 'wandering islands,' its 'quicksands of Unthriftihead,' its 'whirlepoole of Decay,' its 'sea-monsters,' and lastly, its 'bower of Bliss,' and the doom which overtakes it, together with the deliverance of Acrasia's victims, transformed by that witch's spells into beasts. Still more powerful is the allegory of worldly ambition, illustrated under the name of 'the cave of Mammon.' The Legend of Holiness delineates with not less insight those enemies which wage war upon the spiritual life." All this Milton had studied in the *Faerie Queene*, and had understood it, and, like Sir Guyon, he felt himself to be a knight enrolled under the banner of Purity and Self-Control. So that, in *Comus*, we find the sovereign value of Temperance or Self-Regulation—what the Greeks called σωφροσύνη—set forth no less

clearly than in Spenser's poem in Milton's mask it becomes almost identical with Virtue itself. The enchantments of Acrasia in her Bower of Bliss become the spells of Comus, the armour of Belpheobe becomes the "complete steel" of Chastity, while the supremacy of Conscience, the bounty of Nature and man's ingratitude, the unloveliness of Mammon and of Excess, the blossom of Courtesy oft found on lowly stalk, and the final triumph of Virtue through striving and temptation, all are dwelt upon

It is the mind that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poore

so speaks Spenser, and Milton similarly—

He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid day sun,
Himself is his own dungeon

In endeavouring still further to trace, by means of verbal or structural resemblances, the sources from which Milton drew his materials for Comus, critics have referred to Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* (1595), to Fletcher's pastoral, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, of which Charles Lamb has said that if all its parts 'had been in unison with its many innocent scenes and sweet lyric intermixtures, it had been a poem fit to vie with *Comus* or the *Arcadia*, to have been put into the hands of boys and virgins, to have made matter for young dreams, like the loves of Hermia and Lysander', to Ben Jonson's mask of *Pleasure reconciled to Virtue* (1619), in which Comus is "the god of cheer, or the Belly", and to the *Comus* of

Erycius Puteanus (Henri du Puy), Professor of Eloquence at Louvain. It is true that Fletcher's pastoral was being acted in London about the time Milton was writing his *Comus*, that the poem by the Dutch Professor was republished at Oxford in 1634, and that resemblances are evident between Milton's poem and those named. But Professor Masson does well in warning us that "infinitely too much has been made of such coincidences. After all of them, even the most ideal and poetical, the feeling in reading *Comus* is that all here is different, all peculiar." Whatever Milton borrowed, he borrowed, as he says himself, in order to better it.

It is interesting to consider the mutual relations of the poems written by Milton at Horton. Everything that Milton wrote is Miltonic, he had what has been called the power of transforming everything into himself, and these poems are, accordingly, evidences of the development of Milton's opinions and of his secret purpose. It has been said that *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are to be regarded as "the pleadings, the decision on which is in *Comus*"—*L'Allegro* representing the Cavalier, and *Il Penseroso* the Puritan element. This is true only in a limited sense. It is true that the Puritan element in the Horton series of poems becomes more patent as we pass from the two lyrics to the mask of *Comus*, and from *Comus* to the elegy of *Lycidas*, just as, in the corresponding periods of time, the evils connected with the reign of Charles I and with Laud's crusade against Puritanism were becoming more pronounced. But we can hardly regard Milton as having expressed any new decision in *Comus*—the decision is already made

when "vain deluding Joys" are banished in *Il Penseroso*, and "loathed Melancholy" in *L'Allegro*. The mask is an expansion and exaltation of the delights of the contemplative man, but there is still a place for the "unreproved pleasures" of the cheerful man. Unless it were so, *Comus* could not have been written, there would have been no "sunshine holiday" for the rustics and no "victorious dance" for the gentle lady and her brothers. But in *Comus* we realise the mutual relation of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, we see their application to the joys and sorrows of the actual life of individuals, we observe human nature in contact with the "hard assays" of life. And, subsequently, in *Lycidas* we are made to realise that this human nature is Milton's own, and to understand how it was that his Puritanism which, three years before, had permitted him to write a cavalier mask, should, three years after, lead him from the fresh fields of poetry into the barren plains of controversial prose.

The Mask was a favourite form of entertainment in England in Milton's youth, and had been so from the time of Henry VIII, in whose reign elaborate masked shows, introduced from Italy, first became popular. But they seem to have found their way into England, in a rude form, even earlier, and we read of court disguisings in the reign of Edward III. It is usually said that the Mask derives its name from the fact that the actors wore masks, and in Hall's Chronicle we read that, in 1512, "on the day of Epiphany at night, the king, with eleven others, was disguised after the manner of Italy, called a Mask, a thing not seen before in England, they were appareled in garments long and broad, wrought

all with gold, with visors and caps of gold " The truth, however, seems to be that the use of a visor was not essential in such entertainments, which, from the first, were called 'masks,' the word 'masker' being used sometimes of the players, and sometimes of their disguises. The word has come to us, through the French form *masque*, cognate with Spanish *mascarada*, a masquerade or assembly of maskers, otherwise called a mummer. Up to the time of Henry VIII these entertainments were of the nature of dumb show or *tableaux vivants*, and delighted the spectators chiefly by the splendour of the costumes and machinery employed in their representation, but, afterwards, the chief actors spoke their parts, singing and dancing were introduced, and the composition of masks for royal and other courtly patrons became an occupation worthy of a poet. They were frequently combined with other forms of amusement, all of which were, in the case of the Court, placed under the management of a Master of Revels, whose official title was *Magister Jocorum, Revellorum et Mascorum*, in the first printed English tragedy, *Corboduc* (1565), each act opens with what is called a dumb show or mask. But the more elaborate form of the Mask soon grew to be an entertainment complete in itself, and the demand for such became so great in the time of James I and Charles I that the history of these reigns might almost be traced in the succession of masks then written. Ben Jonson, who thoroughly established the Mask in English literature, wrote many Court Masks, and made them a vehicle less for the display of 'painting and carpentry' than for the expression of the intellectual and social life of his time. His masks are

excelled only by *Comus*, and possess in a high degree that 'Doric delicacy' in their songs and odes which Sir Henry Wotton found so ravishing in Milton's mask Jonson in his lifetime, declared that, next himself, only Fletcher and Chapman could write a mask, and apart from the compositions of these writers and of William Browne (*Inner Temple Masque*), there are few specimens worthy to be named along with Jonson's until we come to Milton's *Arcades*. Other mask-writers were Middleton, Dekker, Shirley, Carew, and Davenant, and it is interesting to note that in Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (1633-4), for which Lawes composed the music, the two boys who afterwards acted in *Comus* had juvenile parts. It has been pointed out that the popularity of the Mask in Milton's youth received a stimulus from the Puritan hatred of the theatre which found expression at that time, and drove non-Puritans to welcome the Mask as a protest against that spirit which saw nothing but evil in every form of dramatic entertainment. Milton, who enjoyed the theatre—both "Jonson's learned sock" and what "ennobled hath the buskined stage"—was led, through his friendship with the musician Lawes, to compose a mask to celebrate the entry of the Earl of Bridgewater upon his office of "Lord President of the Council in the Principality of Wales and the Marches of the same." He had already written, also at the request of Lawes, a mask, or portion of a mask, called *Arcades*, and the success of this may have stimulated him to higher effort. The result was *Comus*, in which the Mask reached its highest level, and after which it practically faded out of our literature.

Milton's two masks, *Arcades* and *Comus*, were written

for members of the same noble family, the former in honour of the Countess Dowager of Derby, and the latter in honour of John, first Earl of Bridgewater, who was both her stepson and son-in-law. Thus two-fold relation arose from the fact that the Earl was the son of Viscount Brackley, the Countess's second husband, and had himself married Lady Frances Stanley, a daughter of the Countess by her first husband, the fifth Earl of Derby. Amongst the children of the Earl of Bridgewater were three who took important parts in the representation of *Comus*.—Alice, the youngest daughter, then about fourteen years of age, who appeared as *The Lady*, John Viscount Brackley, who took the part of the *Elder Brother*, and Thomas Egerton, who appeared as the *Second Brother*. We do not know who acted the parts of *Comus* and *Sabrina*, but the part of the *Attendant Spirit* was taken by Henry Lawes, "gentleman of the Chapel Royal, and one of His Majesty's private musicians." The Earl's children were his pupils, and the mask was naturally produced under his direction. Milton's friendship with Lawes is shown by the sonnet which the poet addressed to the musician

Harry, whose tuneful and well measur'd song
 First taught our English music how to span
 Words with just note and accent, not to scan
 With Midas' ears, committing short and long,
 Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
 With praise enough for Envy to look wan,
 To after age thou shalt be writ the man,
 That with smooth air could st humour best our tongue
 Thou honour st Verse, and Verse must lend her wing
 To honour thee the priest of Phoebus quire,
 That tun'at their happiest lines in hymn, or story

Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
 Than his Casella, whom he woo'd to sing,
 Met in the milder shades of Purgatory

We must remember also that it was to *Lawes* that Milton's *Comus* owed its first publication, and, as we see from the dedication prefixed to the text, that he was justly proud of his share in its first representation

Such were the persons who appeared in Milton's mask, they are few in number, and the plan of the piece is correspondingly simple. There are three scenes which may be briefly characterised thus

I The Tempter and the Tempted lines 1 658

Scene A wild wood

II. The Temptation and the Rescue lines 659 958

Scene The Palace of Comus

III. The Triumph lines 959 1023

Scene The President's Castle

In the first scene, after a kind of prologue (lines 1-92), the interest rises as we are introduced first to Comus and his rout, then to the Lady alone and "night-foundered," and finally to Comus and the Lady in company. At the same time the nature of the Lady's trial and her subsequent victory are foreshadowed in a conversation between the brothers and the attendant Spirit. This is one of the more Miltonic parts of the mask in the philosophical reasoning of the elder brother, as opposed to the matter-of-fact arguments of the younger, we trace the young poet fresh from the study of the divine volume of Plato, and filled with a noble trust in God. In the second scene we breathe the unhallowed air of the abode of the wily

tempter, who endeavours, "under fair pretence of friendly ends," to wind himself into the pure heart of the Lady. But his "gay rhetoric" is futile against the "sun-clad power of chastity", and he is driven off the scene by the two brothers, who are aided and instructed by the Spirit disguised as the shepherd Thyrsis. But the Lady, having been lured into the haunt of impurity, is left spell-bound, and appeal is made to the pure nymph Sabrina, who is "swift to aid a virgin, such as was herself, in hard-besetting need". It is in the contention between Comus and the Lady in this scene that the interest of the mask may be said to culminate, for here its purpose stands revealed. "it is a song to Temperance as the ground of Freedom, to temperance as the guard of all the virtues, to beauty as secured by temperance, and its central point and climax is in the pleading of these motives by the Lady against their opposites in the mouth of the Lord of sensual Revel." *Milton Classical Writers*. In the third scene the Lady Alice and her brothers are presented by the Spirit to their noble father and mother as triumphing "in victorious dance o'er sensual folly and intemperance". The Spirit then speaks the epilogue, calling upon mortals who love true freedom to strive after virtue.

Love Virtue, she alone is free
 She can teach ye how to climb
 Higher than the spherie chime,
 Or, if Virtue feeble were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her

The last couplet Milton afterwards, on his Italian journey, entered in an album belonging to an Italian named Cerdogni, and underneath it the words, *Coelum*

non animum muto dum trans mare curro, and his signature, Joannes Miltonius, Anglus. The juxtaposition of these verses is significant though he had left his own land Milton had not become what, fifty or sixty years before, Roger Ascham had condemned as an "Italianated Englishman". He was one of those "worthy Gentlemen of England, whom all the Siren tongues of Italy could never untwine from the mast of God's word, nor no enchantment of vanity overturn them from the fear of God and love of honesty" (Ascham's *Scholemaster*). And one might almost infer that Milton, in his account of the sovereign plant Haemony which was to foil the wiles of *Comus*, had remembered not only Homer's description of the root Moly "that Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave,"* but also Ascham's remarks thereupon "The true medicine against the enchantments of Cice, the vanity of licentious pleasure, the enticements of all sin, is, in Homer, the herb Moly, with the black root and white flower, sour at first, but sweet in the end, which Hesiod termeth the study of Virtue, hard and irksome in the beginning, but in the end easy and pleasant. And that which is most to be marvelled at, the divine poet Homer saith plainly that this medicine against sin and vanity is

* It is noteworthy that Lamb, whose allusiveness is remarkable, employs in his account of the plant Moly almost the exact words of Milton's description of Haemony, compare the following extract from *The Adventures of Ulysses* with lines 629-640 of *Comus* "The flower of the herb Moly, which is sovereign against enchantments the moly is a small unsightly root, its virtues but little known, and in low estimation, the dull shepherd treads on it every day with his clouted shoes, but it bears a small white flower, which is medicinal against charms, blights, mildews, and damps."

not found out by man, but given and taught by God." Milton's *Comus*, like his last great poems, is a poetical expression of the same belief. "His poetical works, the outcome of his inner life, his life of artistic contemplation, are," in the words of Prof Dowden, "various renderings of one dominant idea—that the struggle for mastery between good and evil is the prime fact of life, and that a final victory of the righteous cause is assured by the existence of a divine order of the universe, which Milton knew by the name of 'Providence'."

COMUS

A MASK

PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634

BEFORE

JOHN, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,

THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES

*The Copy of a Letter written by Sir Henry Wotton to the Author
upon the following Poem .*

From the College, this 13 of April, 1638.

SIR,

It was a special favour, when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it, and to enjoy it rightly, and, in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr H, I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your said learned friend, at a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together some good authors of the antient time, among which I observed you to have been familiar

Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations both for a very kind letter from you dated the sixth of this month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language *Ipsa mollities* * But I must not omit to tell you, that I now only owe you thanks for

* It is delicacy itself

intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer For the work itself I had viewed some good while before, with singular delight, having received it from our common friend Mr R in the very close of the late R's poems, printed at Oxford, whereunto it is added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of stationers, and to leave the reader *con la bocca dolce*.*

Now, Sir, concerning your travels, wherein I may challenge a little more privilege of discourse with you, I suppose you will not blanch† Paris in your way, therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr M B, whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S as his governor, and you may surely receive from him good directions for shaping of your farther journey into Italy, where he did reside by my choice some time for the king, after mine own recess from Venice

I should think that your best line will be through the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa, whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge I hasten, as you do, to Florence, or Siena, the rather to tell you a short story, from the interest you have given me in your safety

At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipione, an old Roman courtier in dangerous times, having been steward to the Duca di Pagliano, who with all his family were strangled, save this only man, that escaped by foresight of the tempest With him I had often much chat of those affairs, into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour, and at my departure toward Rome (which had been the centre of his experience) I had won confidence enough to beg his advice, how I might carry myself securely there, without offence of others, or

* With a sweet taste in his mouth (so that he may desire more)

† Avoid.

of mine own conscience *Signor Arrigo mio* (says he), *I pensieri stretti, ed il viso sciolto*,* will go safely over the whole world Of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgment doth need no commentary, and therefore, Sir, I will commit you with it to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining

Your friend as much to command

as any of longer date,

HENRY WOTTON

Postscript

Sir,—I have expressly sent this my footboy to prevent your departure without some acknowledgment from me of the receipt of your obliging letter, having myself through some business, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad and diligent to entertain you with home novelties, even for some fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the cradle †

* 'Thoughts close countenance open.'

† This letter was printed in the edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673 It was written by Sir Henry Wotton Provost of Eton College, just in time to overtake Milton before he set out on his journey to Italy As a parting act of courtesy Milton had sent Sir Henry a letter with a copy of *Lawes's* edition of his *Comus*, and the above letter is an acknowledgment of the favour

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE *

JOHN, LORD VISCOUNT BRACKLEY,

Son and Heir-Apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, etc

MY LORD,

This Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a final Dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the Author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view, and now to offer it up, in all rightful devotion, to those fair hopes and rare endowments of your much promising youth, which give a full assurance to all that know you, of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name, and receive this as your own, from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured Parents, and as in this representation your attendant *Thyrsis*,† so now in all real expression,

Your faithful and most humble Servant,

H LAWES

* Dedication of the anonymous edition of 1637 reprinted in the edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673

† See Notes, line 494.

THE PERSONS

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS
COMUS, with his Crew

THE LADY

FIRST BROTHER.

SECOND BROTHER

SABRINA, the Nymph

The Chief Persons which presented were —

The Lord Brackley ,

Mr Thomas Egerton, his Brother ,

The Lady Alice Egerton

COMUS.

The first Scene discovers a wild wood

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT descends or enters

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants 10
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity
To such my errand is, and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds *st. ye*
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould
But to my task Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot, 'twixt high and nether Jove, 20
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles

That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
 The unadorn'd bosom of the deep,
 Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
 By course commits to several government,
 And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
 And wield their little tridents But this Isle,
 The greatest and the best of all the main,
 He quarters to his blue haired deities,
 And all this tract that fronts the falling sun 30
 A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
 Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
 An old and haughty nation, proud in arms
 Where his fair offspring nursed in princely lore,
 Are coming to attend their father's state,
 And new intrusted sceptre But their way
 Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood
 The nodding horror of whose shady brows
 Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger,
 And here their tender age might suffer peril, 40
 But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
 I was despatched for their defence and guard
 And listen why, for I will tell you now
 What never yet was heard in tale or song,
 From old or modern bard, in hall or bower
 Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
 Crushed the sweet poison of misus'd wine,
 After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
 Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
 On Circe's island fell (who knows not Circe, 50
 The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup
 Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
 And downward fell into a grovelling swine ?)
 This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,
 With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
 Hail'd by him, ere he parted thence, a son
 Much like his father, but his mother more,

Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named
 Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
 Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, 60
 At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
 And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
 Excels his mother at her mighty art,
 Offering to every weary traveller
 His orient liquor in a crystal glass, *liquid*
 To quench the drouth of Phœbus, which as they taste
 (For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
 Soon as the potion works, then human count'nance,
 The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
 Into some brutish form of wolf or bear, 70
 Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
 All other parts remaining as they were
 And they, so perfect is their misery,
 Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
 But boast themselves more comely than before,
 And all their friends and native home forget,
 To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty
 Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
 Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
 Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star 80
 I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convey,
 As now I do But first I must put off
 These my sky-robcs, spun out of Iris' woof, *l.*
 And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
 That to the service of this house belongs,
 Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
 And hush the waving woods, nor of less faith,
 And in this office of his mountain watch
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid 90
 Of this occasion But I hear the tread
 Of hateful steps, I must be viewless now

COMUS enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other, with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands

Comus The star that bids the shepherd fold
 Now the top of heaven doth hold,
 And the gilded car of day
 His glowing axle doth allay
 In the steep Atlantic stream,
 And the slope sun his upward beam
 Shoots against the dusky pole,
 Pacing toward the other goal 100
 Of his chamber in the east.
 Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
 Midnight shout and revelry,
 Tipsy dance and jollity
 Brud your locks with rosy twine,
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.
 Rigour now is gone to bed,
 And Advice with scrupulous head,
 Strict Age, and sour Severity,
 With their grave saws, in slumber lie 110
 We, that are of purer fire,
 Imitate the starry quire,
 Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
 Lead in swift round the months and years
 The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
 Now to the moon in wavering morrice move,
 And on the tawny sands and shelves
 Trip the pit faeries and the dapper elves
 By dimpled brook and fountain brim,
 The wood nymphs, decked with daisies trim, 120
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep
 What hath night to do with sleep?

Night hath better sweets to prove,
 Venus now wakes, and wakens Love,
 Come, let us our rights begin,
 'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
 Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
 Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
 Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame
 Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
 That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
 Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
 And makes one blot of all the air!
 Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
 Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend
 Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
 Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
 The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
 From her cabined loop-hole peep,
 And to the tell tale Sun descry
 Our concealed solemnity
 Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
 In a light fantastie round. [The Measure

Break off, break off! I feel the different pae
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground
 Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees,
 Our number may affright Some virgin sure
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)
 Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
 And to my wily trams I shall ere long
 Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
 About my mother Circe Thus I hurl
 My dazling spells into the spongy air,
 Of power to cheat the eye with bleau illusion,
 And give it false presentments, lest the place
 And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
 And put the damsel to suspicious flight,

Which must not be, for that's against my course
 I, under fair pretence of friendly ends, 160
 And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
 Baited with reasons not unplaussible,
 Wind me into the easy hearted man,
 And hug him into snares When once her eye
 Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
 I shall appear some harmless villager
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear
 But here she comes, I fairly step aside,
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The LADY enters

Lady This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
 My best guide now Methought it was the sound
 Of not and ill-managed merriment, 172
 Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
 Stirs up among the loose unlettered lunds,
 When, for their teenning flocks and granges full,
 In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
 And thank the gods amiss I should be loth
 To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
 Of such late wasailers, yet, oh! where else
 Shall I inform my unacquainted feet 180
 In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
 My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
 With this long way, resolving here to lodge
 Under the spreading favour of these pines,
 Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side
 To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
 As the kind hospitable woods provide
 They left me then when the grey-hooded 'Even,
 Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
 Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain 190
 But where they are, and why they came not back,

Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
 They had engaged their wandering steps too far,
 And envious darkness, ere they could return,
 Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
 Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end, *W*
 In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
 That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
 With everlasting oil to give due light
 To the misled and lonely traveller? 200

This is the place, as well as I may guess,
 Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
 Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear,
 Yet nought but single darkness do I find. *z*
 What might this be? A thousand fantasies
 Begin to throng into my memory,
 Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows *q*
 And airy tongues that syllable men's names
 On sands and shores and desert wildernesses
 These thoughts may startle well, but not astound 210
 The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
 By a strong siding champion, Conscience
 O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
 Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
 And thou unblemished form of Chastity!

I see ye visibly, and now believe
 That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
 Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
 Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
 To keep my life and honour unassailed *note* 220
 Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
 I did not err there does a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
 And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
 I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest

I'll venture, for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off

Song

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen 230
 Within thy ury shell
 By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet embroidered vale
 Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
 That liketh thy Narcissus are?
 O, if thou have
 Hid them in some flowery cave,
 Tell me but where,
 Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!

Comus Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night, 250
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Nudes,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lay it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And clud her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense, 260

And in sweet madness robbed it of itself,
 But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
 I never heard till now I'll speak to her,
 And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!
 Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
 Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan by blest song
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood

Lady Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
 That is addressed to unattending ears
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
 How to regain my severed company,
 Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

Comus What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you
 thus?

Lady Dim darkness and this leafy labyrinth

Comus Could that divide you from near-ushering
 guides?

Lady They left me weary on a grassy turf 280

Comus By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

Lady To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring

Comus And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?

Lady They were but twain, and purposed quick
 return.

Comus Perhaps forestalling night prevented them

Lady How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Comus Imports their loss, beside the present need?

Lady No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Comus Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

Lady As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips. 290

Comus Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox

In his loose traces from the furrow came,
 And the swinked hedger at his supper sat.

I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots,
Their port was more than human, as they stood
I took it for a faery vision

Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live, 300
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
And, as I passed, I worshiped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them

Lady Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?

Comus Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

Lady To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well practised feet. 310

Comus I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood,
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise, 315
I can conduct you, lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe 320
Till further quest.

Lady Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,

I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
 To my proportioned strength ! Shepherd, lead c...

[*Eaeunt*

Enter the Two BROTHERS

Elder Brother Unmuffle, ye faint stars, and thou, fair
 moon, 331

That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
 Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
 And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
 In double night of darkness and of shades,
 Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
 With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
 Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
 Of some clay habitation, visit us
 With thy long levelled rule of streaming light, 340
 And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
 Or Tyrian Cynosure

Second Brother Or, if our eyes
 Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
 The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
 Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
 Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
 Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
 'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
 In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs
 But, Oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister ! 350
 Where may she wander now, whither betake her
 From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles ?
 Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
 Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
 Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears
 What if in wild amazement and affright,
 Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
 Of savage hunger, or of savage heat !

Elder Brother Peace, brother be not over-exquisite

To cast the fashion of uncertain evils , 360
 For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
 What need a man forestall his date of grief,
 And run to meet what he would most avoid ?
 Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
 How bitter is such self delusion !
 I do not think my sister so to seek,
 Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
 And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
 As that the single want of light and noise
 (Not being in danger, as I trust she is not) 370
 Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts
 And put them into misbecoming plight
 Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
 By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
 Were in the flat sea sunk And Wisdom's self
 Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
 Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
 She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
 That, in the various bustle of resort, 380
 Were all to ruffled, and sometimes impaired
 He that has light within his own clear breast
 May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day
 But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
 Beghtled walks under the mid-day sun ,
 Himself is his own dungeon

Second Brother

'Tis most true
 That musing meditation most affects
 The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
 Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
 And sits as safe as in a senate house ,
 For who would rob a hermit of his weeds, 390
 His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
 Or do his grey hairs any violence ?
 But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
 Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard

Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye
 To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
 From the rash hand of bold Incontinence
 You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
 Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
 And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope 400
 Danger will wink on Opportunity,
 And let a single helpless maiden pass
 Unmjured in this wild surrounding waste.
 Of night or loneliness it recks me not,
 'I fear the dread events that dog them both,
 Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
 Of our unowned sister

Elder Brother I do not, brother,
 Infer-as if I thought my sister's state
 Secure without all doubt or controversy,
 Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear 410
 Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
 That-I incline to hope rather than fear,
 And gladly banish squint suspicion
 My sister is not so defenceless left
 As you imagine, she has a hidden strength,
 Which you remember not.

Second Brother What hidden strength,
 Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

Elder Brother I mean that too, but yet a hidden
 strength,
 Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own
 'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity 420
 She that has that is clad in complete steel,
 And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
 May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths:
 Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds,
 Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
 No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity

Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
 By grotts and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
 She may pass on with unblenched majesty, 430
 Be it not done in pride, or in presumption
 Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
 In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
 Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
 That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
 No goblin or swart faery of the mine,
 Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity,
 Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
 Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
 'To testify the arms of chastity? 440
 Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow
 Fair silver shafted queen for ever chaste,
 Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness,
 And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
 The frivolous bolt of Cupid, gods and men
 Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
 What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
 That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
 Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
 But rigid looks of chaste austerity, 450
 And noble grace that dashed brute violence
 With sudden adoration and blank awe?
 So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
 That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
 A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
 And in clear dream and solemn vision
 Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
 Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
 Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
 The unpolluted temple of the mind, 460
 And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
 Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,

By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
 But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
 Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
 The soul grows clotted by contagion,
 Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite loose
 The divine property of her first being
 Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp 470
 Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
 Lingerin' and sitting by a new-made grave,
 As loth to leave the body that it loved,
 And lunked itself by carnal sensuality
 To a degenerate and degraded state.

Second Brother How charming is divine Philosophy !
 Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
 But musical as is Apollo's lute,
 And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
 Where no crude surfeit reigns

Elder Brother List ! list ! I hear 480
 Some far-off hallo break the silent air

Second Brother Methought so too, what should it be ?

Elder Brother For certain,
 Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
 Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
 Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

Second Brother Heaven keep my sister ! Again,
 again, and near !

Best draw, and stand upon our guard

Elder Brother I'll hallo
 If he be friendly, he comes well if not,
 Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us !

Enter the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, habited like a shepherd

That hallo I should know What are you ? speak 490
 Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else

Spirit What voice is that ? my young Lord ? speak
 again

Second Brother O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd,
sure

Elder Brother Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft
deceived

The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook? 500,

Spirit O my loved master's hen, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf, not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought,
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?

Elder Brother To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without
blame

Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. 510

Spirit Ah me unhappy! then my fears are true

Elder Brother What fears, good Thyrsis? Prthee
briefly shew

Spirit I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Climacrus and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell,
For such there be, but unbelief is blind

Within the navel of this hideous wood, 520
Immured in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And hert to every thirsty wanderer

By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage /
Charactered in the face This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by 't' the hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade, whence might by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscur'd haunts of inmost bowers
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way
Thus evening late, by then the chewing flocks 540
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance, 550
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy frightened steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced I was all ear, 560

And took in struns that might create a soul
 Under the ribs of Death But, oh ! ere long
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice
 Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister
 Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear ;
 And " O poor hapless nightingale," thought I,
 " How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare !"
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
 Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
 Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place 570
 Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
 (For so by certain signs I knew), had met
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
 The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey,
 Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
 Supposing him some neighborr villager
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
 Ye were the two she meant, with that I sprung
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here,
 But further know I not

Second Brother O night and shades, 580
 How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
 Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
 Alone and helpless ! Is this the confidence
 You gave me, brother ?

Elder Brother Yes, and keep it still,
 Lean on it safely, not a period
 Shall be unsaid for me Against the threats
 Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
 Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm
 Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
 Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled, 590
 Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last,

Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
 It shall be in eternal restless change
 Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
 The pillared firmament is rottenness,
 And earth's base built on stubble But come, let's on!
 Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven 600
 May never this just sword be lifted up,
 But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
 With all the grisly legions that troop
 Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
 Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
 'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
 And force him to return his purchase back;
 Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
 Cursed as his life

Spirit Alas! good venturous youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise, 610
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must
 Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
 He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
 And crumble all thy sinews

Elder Brother Why, prithee, Shepherd,
 How durst thou then thyself approach so near
 As to make this relation?

Spirit Care and utmost shifts
 How to secure the Lady from surprisal
 Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
 Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
 In every virtuous plant and healing herb
 That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray
 He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing,
 Which when I did, he on the tender grass
 Would sit, and hearken even to ecstacy,
 And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
 And show me simples of a thousand names,

Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.

Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,

But of divine effect, he cull'd me out.

W 630

The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,

But in another country, as he said,

Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil

Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain

Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon,

And yet more medicinal is it than that Moly

That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave

He call'd it Hemony, and gave it me,

And bade me keep it as of sovran use

'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp, 640

Or ghastly Furies' apparition

I purs'd it up, but little reckoning made,

Till now that this extremity compelled.

But now I find it true, for by this means

I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,

Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,

And yet came off If you have this about you

(As I will give you when we go) you may

Boldly assault the necromancer's hall,

Where if he be, with dintless hardihood 650

And brandish'd blade rush on him break his glass;

And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,

But seize his wand Though he and his curst crew

Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,

Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,

Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink

Older Brother Thyrsis, lead on apace, I'll follow thee,

And some good angel bear a shield before us!

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness soft music, tables spread with all dainties COMUS appears with his rabble, and the LADY set in an enchanted chair to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise

Comus Nay, lady, sit If I but wave this wand,
 Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster, 660
 And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
 Root-bound, that fled Apollo

Lady Fool, do not boast
 Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
 With all thy charms, although this corporal mind
 Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good

Comus Why are you vexed, lady? why do you frown?
 Here dwell no frowns, nor anger, from these gates
 Sorrow flies far See, here be all the pleasures
 That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
 When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
 Brisk as the April buds in primrose season
 And first behold this cordial julep here,
 That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
 With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed
 Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
 In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
 Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
 To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst
 Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
 And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent 680
 For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
 But you invert the covenants of her trust,
 And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
 With that which you received on other terms,
 Scorning the unexempt condition
 By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
 Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
 That have been tired all day without repast,
 And timely rest have wanted But, fair virgin,
 This will restore all soon

Lady 'Twill not, false traitor! 690
 'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
 That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies

Was this the cottage and the safe abode
 Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
 These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
 Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
 Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
 With vizored falsehood and base forgery?
 And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
 With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute? 700
 Were it a draught for Juno when she banqueted,
 I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
 But such as are good men can give good things,
 And that which is not good is not delicious
 To a well-governed and wise appetite

Comus O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
 To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
 And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
 Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
 Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth 710
 With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
 Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
 Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
 But all to please and sate the curious taste?
 And set to work millions of spinning worms,
 That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
 To deck her sons, and, that no corner might
 Be vacant of her plenty, in her own looms
 She hatched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems,
 To store her children with. If all the world 720
 Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
 Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
 The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
 Not half his riches known, and yet despised,
 And we should serve him as a grudging master,
 As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
 And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
 Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,

And strangled with her waste fertility
 The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with
 plumes, 730

The herds would over-multitude their lords, *over*
 The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought
 diamonds

Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
 And so bestud with stars, that they below
 Would grow inured to light, and come at last
 To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows
 List, lady, be not coy, and be not cozened
 With that same vaunted name, Virginity
 Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
 But must be current, and the good thereof
 Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
 Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself

740

If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
 It withers on the stalk with languished head
 Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
 In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
 Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
 It is for homely features to keep home,

They had their name thence coarse complexions
 And cheeks of sorry gram will serve to ply *red*
 The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool
 What need of vermillion-tinctured lip for that, *I know*
 Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn? *O. V.*
 There was another meaning in these gifts,
 Think what, and be advised, you are but young yet. -

Lady I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
 In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
 Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
 Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb
 I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
 And virtue has no tongue to check her pride
 Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,

760

As if she would her children should be motou:
 With her abundance She, good cater--
 Means her provision only to the good,
 That live according to her sober laws,
 And holy dictate of spare Temperance
 If every just man that now pines with want
 Had but a moderate and be seeming share
 Of that which lewdly-primpered Luxury 770
 Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
 Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
 In unsuperfluous even proportions,
 And she no whit encumbered with her store,
 And then the Giver would be better thanked,
 His praise due paid for swinish gluttony
 Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
 But with besotted base ingratitude
 Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder Shall I go on?
 Or have I said enow? To him that dares 780
 Arin his profane tongue with contemptuous words
 Against the sun-clad power of christity
 I'm would I something say,—yet to what end?
 Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
 The sublime notion and high mystery
 That must be uttered to unfold the sage
 And serious doctrine of Virginity,
 And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
 More happiness than this thy present lot.
 I enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric, 790
 That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence.
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced
 Yet, should I try, the uncontroll'd worth
 Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence
 That dumb things would be moved to sympathise,
 And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
 Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,

Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head

Comus She fables not I feel that I do fear 800

Her words set off by some superior power;

And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew

Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove

Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus

To some of Saturn's crew I must dissemble,

And try her yet more strongly — Come, no more!

This is mere moral babble, and direct

Against the canon laws of our foundation.

I must not suffer this, yet 'tis but the lees

And settlings of a melancholy blood 810

But this will cure all straight, one sip of this

Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight

Beyond the bliss of dreams Be wise, and faste.

BROTHERS rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The ATTENDANT SPIRIT comes in

Spirit. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?

O ye mistook, ye should have snatched his wand,

And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,

And backward mutters of dissevering power,

We cannot free the Lady that sits here

In stony fetters fixed and motionless.

Yet stay be not disturbed, now I bethink me, 820

Some other means I have which may be used,

Which once of Melibæus old I learnt,

The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,

That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream

Sabrina is her name a virgin pure,

Whilom she was the daughter of Loecrine,

That had the sceptre from his father Brute

She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit

Of her enraged stepdame, Guendolen, 830
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood
 That staved her flight with his cross-flowing course.
 The water nymphs, that in the bottom played,
 Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in, {
 Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall,
 Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head, &
 And gave her to his daughters to imbatho
 In nectared lavers strowed with asphodel, &
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense
 Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived, 840
 And underwent a quick immortal change,
 Made Goddess of the river Still she retains
 Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
 Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
 That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
 Which she with precious vial'd liquors heels
 For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
 Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream 850
 Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
 The clasp'ng charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
 If she be right invoked in warbled song, {
 For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
 In hard-be-setting need This will I try,
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song

SIBRINA fair,
 Listen where thou art sitting 860
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted brims of lilies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber dropping hair,

Listen for dear honour's sake,
 Goddess of the silver lake,
 Listen and save !

Listen, and appear to us,
 In name of great Oceanus
 By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
 And Tethys' grave majestic pace ,
 By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
 And the Carpathian wizard's hook ,
 By scaly Triton's winding shell,
 And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell ,
 By Leucothea's lovely hands,
 And her son that rules the strands ,
 By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
 And the songs of Sirens sweet ,
 By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
 And fair Ligea's golden comb, 880
 Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
 Sleeking her soft alluring locks ,
 By all the Nymphs that nightly dance
 Upon thy streams with wily glance ,
 Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
 From thy coral-paven bed,
 And bridle in thy headlong wave,
 Till thou our summons answered have
 Listen and save !

SABRINA rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings

By the rushy-fringed bank, 890
 Where grows the willow and the osier dank.
 My sliding chariot stays,
 Thick set with igoate, and the azurn sheer
 Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
 That in the channel strays ,
 Whilst from off the waters fleet

Thus I set my printless feet
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread
 Gentle swain, at thy request 900
 I am here !

Spirit Goddess dear,
 We implore thy powerful hand
 To undo the charmed band
 Of true virgin here distressed
 Through the force and through the wile
 Of unblest enchanter vile.

Sabrina Shepherd, 'tis my office best
 To help ensnared chastity
 Brightest Lady, look on me 910
 Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
 Drops that from my fountain pure
 I have kept of precious enre ,
 Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
 Thrice upon thy rubied lip
 Next this marble venom'd seat,
 Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
 I touch with chaste palms moist and cold
 Now the spell hath lost his hold ,
 And I must haste ere morning hour 920
 To wut in Amphitrite's bower

SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat

Spirit Virgin, daughter of Loerne,
 Sprung of old Anchises' line,
 May thy brimm'd waves for this
 Their full tribute never miss
 From a thousand petty rills,
 That tumble down the snowy hills
 Summer drouth or sing'd air
 Never scorch thy tresses fair, 930
 Nor wet October's torrent flood

Thy molten crystal fill with mud ,
 May thy billows roll ashore
 The beryl and the golden ore ,
 May thy lofty head be crowned
 With many a tower and terrace round,
 And here and there thy banks upon
 With groves of myrrh and cinnamon 2

Come, Lady , while Heaven lends us grace,
 Let us fly this cursed place,
 Lest the sorcerer us entice

940

With some other new device.
 Not a waste or needless sound
 Till we come to holier ground
 I shall be your faithful guide
 Through this gloomy covert wide ,
 And not many furlongs thence
 Is your Father's residence,
 Where day and night are met in state
 Many a fiend to gratulate
 His wished presence, and beside

950

All the swains that there abide
 With jigs and rural dance resort
 We shall catch them at their sport,
 And our sudden coming there
 Will double all their mirth and cheer
 Come, let us haste , the stars grow high, }
 But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle, then come in Country Dancers, after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, with the Two BROTHERS and the LADY

Song

Spirit Back, shepherds, back ! Enough your play
 Till next sunshine holiday
 , Here be, without duck or nod,
 Other trappings to be tied

960

Of lighter toes, and such court guise .
 As Mercury did first devise
 With the muncing Dryades
 On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
 I have brought ye new delight
 Here behold so goodly grown
 Three fair branches of your own
 Heaven hath timely tried their youth, 970
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth
 And sent them here through hard assays
 With a crown of deathless praise,
 To triumph in victorious dance
 O'er sensual folly and intemperance

The dances ended, the SPIRIT epiloguizes

Spirit To the ocean now I fly,
 And those happy climes that lie
 Where day never shuts his eye,
 Up in the broad fields of the sky
 There I suck the liquid air, 980
 All amidst the gardens fair
 Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
 That sing about the golden tree
 Along the crisped shades and bowers
 Revels the spruce and jocund Spring,
 The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
 Thither all their bounties bring
 There eternal Summer dwells,
 And west winds with musky wing
 About the cedarn alleys sing 990
 Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
 In's there with humid bow
 Waters the odorous banks, that blow

Flowers of more mingled hue
 Than her purpled scarf can shew,
 And drenches with Elysian dew
 (List, mortals, if your ears be true)
 Beds of hyacinth and roses,
 Where young Adonis oft reposes,
 Waxing well of his deep wound, 1000
 In slumber soft, and on the ground
 Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.
 But far above, in spangled sheen,
 Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced
 Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced
 After her wandering labours long,
 Till free consent the gods among
 Make her his eternal bride,
 And from her fan unspotted side
 Two blissful twins are to be born, 1010
 Youth and Joy, so Jove hath sworn
 But now my task is smoothly done,
 I can fly, or I can run
 Quickly to the green earth's end,
 Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
 And from thence can soar as soon
 To the corners of the moon
 Mortals, that would follow me,
 Love Virtue, she alone is free
 She can teach ye how to climb 1020
 Higher than the spheric chime,
 Or, if Virtue feeble were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her

NOTES

discovers, exhibits, displays The usual sense of 'discover' is to find out or make known, but in Milton and Shakespeare the prefix *dis* has often the more purely negative force of *un*; hence discover = uncover, reveal. Comp —

"Some high climbing hill
Which to his eye *discovers* may be
The goodly prospect of some foreign land "

Par. Lost, iii 546

Attendant Spirit descends The part of the attendant spirit was taken by Lawes (see Introduction), who, in his prologue or opening speech, explains who he is and on what errand he has been sent, hints at the plot of the whole masque, and at the same time compliments the Earl in whose honour the masque is being given (lines 30-36). In the ancient classical drama the prologue was sometimes an outline of the plot, sometimes an address to the audience, and sometimes introductory to the plot. The opening of *Comus* prepares the audience and also directly addresses it (line 43). For the form of the epilogue in the actual performance of the masque see note, l. 975-6.

1 **starry threshold, etc** Comp Virgil "The sire of gods and monarch of men summons a council to the starry chamber" (*subteream in sedem*), *Aen.* x 2.

2 **mansion, abode.** Trench points out that this word denotes strictly "a place of tarrying," which might be for a longer or a shorter time; hence 'a resting place'. Comp *John*, xiv 2, "In my Father's house are many *mansions*," and *Il Pens.* 93, "Her *mansion* in this fleshly nook." The word has now lost the notion of tarrying, and is applied to a large and important dwelling house where, in which the antecedent is separated from the relative, a frequent construction in Milton (comp lines 66, 821, etc.). So in Latin, where the grammatical connection would generally be sufficiently indicated by the inflection shapes spirits. An instance of the manner in which Milton endows spiritual beings with personality without making

them too distinct. "Of all the poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings Milton has succeeded best" (Macaulay) We see this in *Par Lost* (e.g. 11 666) Compare the use of the word 'shape' (Lat *umbra*) in l 207 also *L'Alleg* 4, "horrid shapes and shrieks", and *Il Pens* 6, "fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess" Milton's use of the demonstrative those in this line is noteworthy, comp "that last infirmity of noble mind," *Lyc* 71 it implies that the reference is to something well known, and that further particularisation is needless

3 insphered. 'Sphere,' with its derivatives 'sphery,' 'in sphere,' and 'unspheric' (*Il Pens* 88), is used by Milton with a literal reference to the cosmical framework as a whole (see *Hymn Nat* 48) or to some portion of it In Shakespeare 'sphere' occurs in the wider sense of 'the path in which anything moves' and it is to this metaphorical use of the word that we owe such phrases as 'a person's sphere of life,' 'sphere of action,' etc See also *Comus*, 112-4, 241 3, 1021, *Arc* 62 7, *Par Lost*, v 618, where there are references to the music of the spheres

4 mild an attributive of the whole clause, 'regions of calm and serene air' calm and serene These are not mere synonyms the Lat *serenus* = bright or unclouded, so that the two epithets are to be respectively contrasted with 'smoke' and 'stir' (line 5), 'calm' being opposed to 'stir' and 'serene' to 'smoke' Compare Homer's description of the seat of the gods "Not by wind is it shaken, nor ever wet with rain, nor doth the snow come nigh thereto, but most clear air is spread about it cloudless, and the white light floats over it," *Odyssey*, vi comp note, l 977

5 this dim spot The Spirit describes the Earth as it appears to those immortal shapes whose presence he has just quitted

6 There are here two attributive clauses "which men call Earth" and "(in which) men strive," etc low-thoughted care, narrow minded anxiety, care about earthly things Comp the form of the adjective 'low-browed,' *L'Alleg* 8 both epithets are borrowed by Pope in his *Eloisa*

7 This line is attributive to 'men' pestered pinfold, crowded-together in this cramped space, the Earth *Pester*, which has no connection with *pest*, is a shortened form of *impester*, Fr *empêtrer*, to shackle a horse by the foot when it is at pasture. The radical sense is that of clogging (comp *Son* vii 1), hence of crowding, and finally of annoyance or encumbrance of any kind 'Pinfold' is strictly an enclosure in which stray cattle are pounded or shut up etymologically, the word = *pind fold*, a corruption of *pound-fold* Comp *impound*, *sheep fold*, etc

8 frail and feverish. Comp "life's fitful-fever" (*Macbeth* iii 2 23) This line, like several of the adjacent ones, is alliterative.

9 crown that Virtue gives This is Scriptural language comp *Rei* iv 4, *2 Tim* iv 8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness"

10 this mortal change In Milton's MS line 7 was followed by the words, 'beyond the written date of mortal change,' i.e. beyond, or after, man's appointed time to die These words were struck out, but we may suppose that the words 'mortal change' in line 10 have a similar meaning Milton frequently uses 'mortal' in the sense of 'liable to death,' and hence 'human' as opposed to 'divine' the mortal change is therefore 'the change which occurs to all human beings.' Comp *Job*, xiv 14 "all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" see also line 841 Prof Masson takes it to mean 'this mortal state of life,' as distinguished from a future state of immortality The Spirit uses 'this' as in line 8, in contrast with 'those,' line 2.

11 enthroned gods, etc In allusion to *Rev* iv 4, "And upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments, and on their heads crowns of gold" Milton frequently speaks of the inhabitants of heaven as *enthroned* The accent here falls on the first syllable of the word

12 Yet some there be, etc 'Although men are generally so exclusively occupied with the cares of this life, there are nevertheless a few who aspire,' etc *Be* is here purely indicative This usage is frequent in Elizabethan English, and still survives in parts of England. Comp *Lines on Univ Carrier*, ii 25, where it occurs in a similar phrase, "there be that say 't" also lines 519, 668 It is employed to refer to a number of persons or things regarded as a class. by due steps, i.e. by the steps that are due or appointed comp 'due fact,' *Il Pens* 155 *Due*, *duty*, and *debt* are all from Lat *debitus*, owed

13 their just hands 'Just' belongs to the predicate 'to lay their just hands' = to lay their hands with justice. golden key Comp *Matt* xvi 19, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven", also *Lyc* 111

"Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(The golden opens, the iron shuts again)"

15 errand comp *Par Lost*, iii 652, "One of the seven Who in God's presence nearest to his throne, Stand ready at command, and are his eyes That run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth Bear his swift errands" also vii 579 but for such, i.e. unless it were for such

16 'I would not sully the purity of my heavenly garments with the noisome vapour of this sin corrupted earth' ambrosial, heavenly, also used by Milton in the sense of 'conferring immortality', comp l 840, *Par Lost*, ii 215, iv 219, "blooming

ambrosial fruit." 'Ambrosial,' like 'amaranthus' (*Lyc* 149), is cognate with the Sanskrit *amṛta*, undying, and is applied by Homer to the hair of the gods similarly in Tennyson's *Oenone*, 174 see also *In Memoriam*, lxxxvi. Ben Jonson (*Nep tunc's Triumph*) has 'ambrosian hands,' i.e. hands fit for a deity Ambrosia was the food of the gods weeds now used chiefly in the phrase "widow's weeds," i.e. mourning garment Milton and Shakespeare use it in the general sense of garment or covering in the lines *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, it is applied to the human body itself, comp also *M N D* ii. 1 255, "Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in" See also *Comus*, 189, 390

18 But to my task, i.e. but I must proceed to my task see l 1012

19 every, each It is usual to write *every* *every*, or *each* *each*, but Milton occasionally uses 'every' and 'each' together comp l 311 and *Lyc* 93, "*every* gust off *each* beaked promontory" *Every* denotes *each* without exception, and can now only be used with reference to more than two objects, *each* may refer to two or more

20 by lot, etc When Saturn (Kronos) was dethroned, his empire of the universe was distributed amongst his three sons, Jupiter ('high' Jove), Neptune (the god of the Sea), and Pluto ('nether' or Stygian Jove) In *Iliad* xv Neptune (Poseidon) says "For three brethren are we, and sons of Kronos, whom Rhea bare And in three lots are all things divided, and each drew a domain of his own, and to me fell the hoary sea, to be my habitation for ever, when we shook the lots" nether, lower comp the phrase 'the upper and the nether lip,' and the name Netherlands Hell, the abode of Pluto, is called by Milton 'the nether empire' (*Par Lost*, ii 295) The form *nethermost* (*Par Lost*, ii 955) is, like *aftermost* and *foremost*, a double superlative.

21 sea girt isles Ben Jonson calls Britain a 'sea girt isle' comp l 27 *Isle* is the M. E. *ile*, in which form the *s* has been dropped it is from O F *isle*, Lat *insula* It is therefore distinct from *island*, where an *s* has, by confusion, been inserted Island = M. E. *iland*, A S *igland* (*ig* = island *land* = land) In line 50 Milton wrote 'iland'

22 like to rich and various gems, etc Shakespeare describes England as a 'precious stone set in the silver sea,' *Richard II* ii 1 46 he also speaks of Heaven as being *inlaid* with stars, *Cym* v 5 352, *M of V* v 1 59, "Look how the floor of heaven Is thick *inlaid* with patines of bright gold" Compare also *Par Lost*, iv 700, where Milton refers to the ground as having a rich *inlay* of flowers. (But for its inlay of islands the sea would be bare or unadorned) like here followed by the preposition *to*, and having its proper force as an adjective comp

Il Pens 9 Whether *like* is used as an adjective or an adverb, the preposition is now usually omitted comp 1. 57

24 to grace, i.e. to show favour to a clause of purpose

25 By course commits, etc., i.e. "In regular distribution he commits to each his distinct government" several separate or distinct. Radically *several* is from the verb *sever* it is now used only with plural nouns.

26 sapphire This colour is again associated with the sea in line 29 see note there

27 little tridents, in contrast with that of Neptune, who, "with his trident touch'd the stars" (*Neptune's Triumph*, *Proteus Song*, Ben Jonson)

28 greatest and the best Comp Shakespeare's eulogy in *Rich II* ii. 1 also Ben Jonson's "Albion, Prince of all his Isles," *Neptune's Triumph*, *Apollo's Song*

29 quarters, divides into distinct regions Comp Dryden, *Georg I* 208

"Sailors *quarter'd* Heaven, and found a name
For every fixt and ev'ry wandering star"

Some would take the word as strictly denoting division into four parts "at that time the island was actually divided into four separate governments for besides those at London and Edinburgh there were Lords President of the North and of Wales" (Keightley) blue-haired deities These must be distinct from the tributary gods who wield their little tridents (line 27), otherwise the thought would ill accord with the complimentary nature of, lines 30-36 Regarding the epithet 'blue haired' Masson asks "Can there be a recollection of blue as the British colour, inherited from the old times of blue stained Britons who fought with Caesar" Green haired is the usual epithet for Neptune and his subordinates" in Spenser, for example, the sea-nymphs have long green hair But Ovid expressly calls the sea deities *caculati*, and Neptune *caculeus deus*, thus associating blue with the sea

30 'And all this region that looks towards the West (i.e. Wales) is entrusted to a noble peer of great integrity and power' The peer referred to is the Earl of Bridgewater As Lord President he was entrusted with the civil and military administration of Wales and the four English counties of Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford, and Shropshire That he was a nobleman of high character is shown by the fact that from 1617, when he was nominated one of "his Majestie's Counsellors," he had continued to serve in various important public and private offices On his monument there is the following "He was a profound Scholar, an able Statesman, and a good Christian he was a dutiful Son

to his Mother the Church of England in her persecution, as well as in her great splendour, a loyal Subject to his Sovereign in those worst of times, when it was accounted treason not to be a traitor. As he lived 70 years a pattern of virtue, so he died an example of patience and piety." *falling sun* Lat *sol occidens* Orient and occident (lit 'rising' and 'falling') are frequently used to denote the East and the West

31 *mickle* (A. S. *micel*) great. From this word comes *much* 'Mickle' and 'mnekle' are current in Scotland in the sense of great. Comp *Rom and Jul* ii 3 15, "O, *mickle* is the powerful grace that lies In herbs," etc.

33 An old and haughty nation. The Welsh are Kelts an Aryan people who probably first entered Britain about B.C. 500 they are therefore rightly spoken of as an old nation. Compare Ben Jonson's piece *For the Honour of Wales*

"I is not come here to tauk of Brut

From whence the Welse does take his root," etc.

That they were haughty and 'proud in arms' the Romans found, and after them the Saxons the latter never really held more than the counties of Monmouth and Hereford. In the reign of Edward I. attempts were made by that king to induce the Welsh to come to terms, but the answer of the Barons was "We dare not submit to Edward, nor will we suffer our prince to do so nor do homage to strangers whose tongue, ways and laws we know not of we have only raised war in defence of our lands, laws and rights." By a statute of Henry VIII this 'haughty' people were put in possession of the same rights and liberties as the English proud in arms this is Virgil's *bellogue superbum*, *Aen* i 21 (Warton)

34 *nursed in princely lore*, brought up in a manner worthy of their high position. It is to be noted that the Bridgewater family was by birth distantly connected with the royal family. Milton may allude merely to their connection with the court. *Lore* is cognate with *learn*

35 *their father's state*. This probably refers to the actual ceremonies connected with the installation of the Earl as Lord President. The old sense of 'state' is 'chair of state' comp *Arr* 81, and Jonson's *Hymenaei*, "And see where Juno Dis plays her glittering *state and chair*"

36 *new intrusted*, an adjective compounded of a participle and a simple adverb, *new* being = newly, comp 'smooth ditted' l 56. Contrast the form of the epithet "blue haired," where the compound adjective is formed as if from a noun, 'blue hair' comp "rushy fringed" l 890. Strictly speaking, the Earl's power was not 'new-intrusted,' though it was newly assumed. See Introduction

37 perplexed, interwoven, entangled (Lat. *plecto*, to plait or twist) The word is here used literally and is therefore applicable to inanimate objects. The accent is on the first syllable.

38 horror This word is meant not merely to indicate terror, but also to describe the appearance of the paths. Horror is from Lat. *horrere*, to bristle, and may be rendered 'shagginess' or 'ruggedness,' just as *horrid*, l. 429, means bristling or rugged. Comp. *Par Lost*, l. 563, "a *horrid* front Of dreadful length, and dazzling arms" shady brows this may refer to the trees and bushes overhanging the paths, as the brow overhangs the eyes.

39 Threats not current as a verb forlorn, now used only as an adjective, is the past participle of the old verb *forleoscen*, to lose utterly the prefix *for* has an intensive force, as in *forswear*, but in the latter word the sense of *from* is more fully preserved in the prefix. See note, l. 234.

40 tender age Lady Alice Egerton was about fourteen years of age, the two brothers were younger than she.

41 But that, etc. Grammatically, *but* may be regarded as a subordinative conjunction = 'unless (it had happened) that I was despatched' or, taking it in its original prepositional sense, we may regard it as governing the substantive clause, 'that guard' quick command the adjective has the force of an adverb quick commands being commands that are to be carried quickly. *soveran*, supreme. This is Milton's spelling of the modern word *sovereign*, in which the *g* is due to the mistaken notion that the last syllable of the word is cognate with *reign*. The word is from Lat. *superanum* = chief comp. l. 639.

43 And listen why, etc. 'I was despatched' The language of lines 43, 44 is suggested by Horace's *Odes*, in 1, 2 "Favete linguis, carmina non prius Audita canto" The poet implies that the plot of his mask is original - it is not (he says) to be found in any ancient or modern song or tale that was ever recited either in the 'hall' (= banqueting hall) or in the 'bower' (= private chamber). Or 'hall' and 'bower' may denote respectively the room of the lord and that of his lady.

✓ 46 Milton in his usual significant manner (comp. *L'Allegro* and *H Penseroso*) proceeds to invent a genealogy for Comus. The mask is designed to celebrate the victory of Purity and Person over Desire and Enchantment. Comus, who represents the latter, must therefore spring from parents representing the pleasure of man's lower nature and the misuse of man's higher powers on behalf of falsehood and impurity. These parents are the wine god Bacchus and the sorceress Circe. The former, united with Love is the father of Mirth (see *L'Allegro*) but, united with the cunning Circe, his offspring is a voluptuary.

whose gay exterior and flattering speech hide his dangerously seductive and magical powers. He bears no resemblance, therefore, to *Comus* as represented in Ben Jonson's *Pleasure reconciled to Virtue*, in which mask "*Comus*" and "*The Belly*" are throughout synonymous. In the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, *Comus* is a "drinker of human blood", in Philostratus, he is a rose crowned wine bibber. In Dekker he is "the clerk of gluttony's kitchen". In Massinger he is "the god of pleasure", and in the work of Dryden & Pateanus he is a graceful reveller, the genius of love and cheerfulness. Prof. Masson says, "*Milton's Comus* is a creation of his own, for which he was as little indebted intrinsically to Pateanus as to Ben Jonson. For the purpose of his masque at Ludlow Castle he was bold enough to add a brand-new god, no less, to the classic Pantheon, and to import him into Britain." Bacchus, the god who taught men the preparation of wine. He is the Greek Dionysus, who, on one of his voyages, hired a vessel belonging to some Tyrrheman pirates. These men resolved to sell him as a slave. Thereupon, he changed the mast and oars of the ship into serpents and the sailors into dolphins. The meeting of Bacchus with Circe is Milton's own invention, in the *Odyssey* it is Ulysses who lights upon her island. "And we came to the isle Euan, where dwelt Circe of the braided tresses, an awful goddess of mortal speech, own sister to the wizard Hecate," *Odys.* 7 from out, etc. *Comp Par Lost*, v 345 'From out' has the same force as the more common 'out from'.

47 misused, abused. The prefix *mis-* was very generally used by Milton; e.g. *mis-like*, *mis-deem*, *miscreated*, *mis-thought* (all obsolete).

48 After the Tuscan mariners transformed, i.e. after the transformation of the Tuscan mariners (see Ovid, *Met.* iii) "They are called Tuscan, because Tyrrhemia in Central Italy was named Etruria or Tuscia by the Romans. Etruria includes modern Tuscany. This grammatical construction is common in Latin, a passive participle combined with a substantive answering to an English verbal or abstract noun connected with another noun by the preposition *of*, and used to denote a fact in the past, e.g. "since created man" (*P. L.* i 573) = since the creation of man "this loss recovered" (*P. L.* ii 21) = the recovery of this loss.

49 as the winds listed, at the pleasure of the winds. *comp John*, iii 8, "the wind bloweth where it listeth", *Jyc* 123. The verb *list* is, in older English, generally used impersonally, and in Chaucer we find 'if thee lust' or 'if thee list' = if it please thee. The word survives in the adjective *listless* of which the older form was *lustless*. The noun *lust* has lost its original and wider sense (which it still has in German), and now signifies 'longing desire'.

50 On Circe's island fell. Circe's island = Acaea, off the coast of Latium. Circe was the daughter of Helios (the Sun) by the

ocean nymph Perse On 'island' see note, l 21, and with this use of the verb *fall* comp the Latin *incidere in* The sudden introduction of the interrogative clause in this line is an example of the figure of speech called anadiplosis

✓ 51 charmed cup, i.e. liquor that has been *charmed* or rendered magical. *Charms* are incantations or magic verses (Lat *carmina*) comp lines 526 and 817 Grammatically, 'cup' is the object of 'tasted'

52 Whoever tasted lost, i.e. who tasted (he) lost. In this construction *whoever* must precede both verbs, Shakespeare frequently uses *who* in this sense, and Milton occasionally comp *Son* xii 12, "*who* loves that must first be wise and good" See Abbott, § 251 lost his upright shape In *Odyssey* xi we read "So Circe led them (followers of Ulysses) in and set them upon chairs and high seats, and made them a mess of cheese and barley-meal and yellow honey with Pramnian wine, and mixed harmful drugs with the food to make them utterly forget their own country. Now when she had given them the cup and they had drunk it off, presently she smote them with a wand, and in the styles of the swine she penned them. So they had the head and voice, the bristles and the shape of swine, but their mind abode even as of old. Thus were they penned there weeping, and Circe flung them acorns and mast and fruit of the cornel tree to eat, whereon wallowing swine do always batten" (*Butcher and Lang's translation*)

54 clustering locks comp l. 608 Milton here pictures the Theban Bacchus a type of manly beauty, having his head crowned with a wreath of vine and ivy both of these plants were sacred to the god Comp *L'Alleg* 16, "ivy crowned Bacchus, *Par Lost*, iv 303, *Sams Agon* 569

55 his blithe youth, i.e. his fresh young figure

57 'A son much like his father, but more like his mother' This may indicate that it is upon Comus's character as a sorcerer rather than as a reveller that the story of the mask depends; Comp *Mask* of *Hymen*

"Much of the father's face,
More of the mother's grace."

58 Comus see note, l 46 The Greek word *καμος* denoted a revel or merry making, afterwards it came to mean the personification of riotous mirth, the god of Revel Hence also the word *comedy* In classical mythology the individuality of Comus is not well defined this enabled Milton more readily to endow him with entirely new characteristics

59 frolic an instance of the original use of the word as an adjective, comp *L'Alleg* 18, "frolic wind" Tennyson's *Ulysses*,

“a frolic welcome.” It is now chiefly used as a noun or a verb, and a new adjective, *frolicsome*, has taken its place, from this, again, comes the noun *frolicsomeness*. *Frolic* is from the Dutch, and cognate with German *fröhlich*, so that *lic* in ‘frolic’ corresponds to *ly* in such words as *cleanly*, *godly*, etc. of this use of the preposition may be compared with the Latin genitive in such phrases as *æger animi* = sick of soul, of = ‘because of’ or ‘in respect of.’

60 Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, i.e. roving through Gaul and Spain. ‘Rove’ here governs an accusative, comp. *Lyc.* 173, “walked the waves”, *Par Lost*, i. 521, “roamed the utmost Isles.”

61 betakes him. The pronoun has here a reflexive force in Elizabethan English, and still more often in Early English, this use of the simple pronouns is common (see Abbott, § 223). Compare l. 163 *ominous*, literally = full of omens or portents comp. ‘monstrous’ = full of monsters (*Lyc* 158), also l. 79 ‘Ominous’ has now acquired the sense of ‘ill-omened’, compare the acquired sense of ‘hapless,’ ‘unfortunate,’ etc.

65 orient, bright. The Lat *oriens* = rising, hence (from being applied to the sun) = eastern (l. 30), and hence generally ‘bright’ or ‘shining’ comp. *Par Lost*, i. 546, “With *orient* colours waving.”

66 drouth of Phoebus, i.e. thirst caused by the heat of the sun. Phoebus is Apollo, the Sun-god. Compare l. 928, where ‘drouth’ = want of rain, the more usual spelling is *drought* which see note, l. 2. ‘Which’ is here object of ‘taste,’ and refers to ‘liquor.’

67 fond, foolish (its primary sense). *Fonned* was the participle of an old verb *fonnen*, to be foolish. The word is now used to express great liking or affection the idea of folly being almost entirely lost. Chaucer has *fonne*, a fool comp. *Il Pens* 6, “fancies *fond*”, *Lyc* 56, “I *fondly* dream”, *Sams Agon* 1682, “So *fond* are mortal men.”

68 Soon as, etc., i.e. as soon as the magical draught produces its effect. In line 66 *as* is temporal. *potion*. Radically, *potion* = a drink, but it is generally used in the sense of a medicated or poisonous draught. *Poison* is the same word through the French.

69 Express resemblance of the gods. Comp. Shakespeare “What a piece of work is man! in action how like an angel, in apprehension, how like a god!” See also *Par Lost*, iii. 44, “human face divine.”

71 ounce. This is the *Felis uncia*, allied to the panther and the cheetah. Some connect it with the Persian *yuz*, panther.

72. All other parts, etc. In the *Odyssey* (see note on l. 52) the

bodies of those transformed by Circe were entirely changed, here only the head. As one editor observes, this suited the convenience of the performers who were to appear on the stage in masks (see *Stage direction* l 92 3). Grammatically, line 72 is an example of the absolute construction, common in Latin. The noun ('parts') is neither the subject nor the object of a verb, but is used along with some attributive adjunct—generally a participle ('remaining')—to serve the purpose of an adverb or adverbial clause. The noun (or pronoun) is usually said to be the nominative absolute, but, in the case of pronouns, Milton uses the nominative and the objective indifferently. In Old English the dative was used.

73 perfect, complete (Lat. *perfectus*, done thoroughly)

74 Not once perceive, etc. This was not the case with the followers of Ulysses see note l 52

76 friends and native home forgot. Circe's cup has here the effect ascribed to the lotus in *Odyssey* ix. "Now whosoever of them did eat the honey sweet fruit of the lotus had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotus eating men ever feeding on the lotus and forgetful of his homeward way." In Tennyson's *Lotus-Eaters* there is no forgetfulness of friends and home. "Sweet it was to dream of Fatherland, Of child, and wife and slave." Masson also refers to Plato's ethical application of the story (*Rep* viii). "Plato speaks of the moral lotophagus, or youth steeped in sensuality, as accounting his very viciousness a developed manhood, and the so called virtues but signs of rusticity." Compare also Spenser, *F* Q II. 12. 86, "One above the rest in speciall, That had an hog been late, did him muscall, That had from hoggish form him brought to natural."

77 sensual sty see note on l 52. To those who, "with low thoughted care, are "unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives," the world becomes little better than a sensual sty. This line is adverbial to *forget*.

78. favoured compare Lat. *gratus* = favoured (adj.)

79 adventurous, full of risks. The current sense of 'adventurous' applied only to persons, is "enterprising." See l 61, 609 glade strictly, an open space in a wood, and hence applied (as here) to the wood itself. It is cognate with *glow* and *glitter*, and its fundamental sense is 'a passage for light' (Skeat).

80 glancing star a shooting star. Comp *Par Lost*, iv 556

"Swift as a shooting star

In autumn thwarts the night "

The rhythm of the line and the prevalence of sibilants suit the sense.

81 *convoy* comp *Par Lost*, vi 752, "convoied By four cherubic shapes" It is another form of *convey* (Lat. *con* = together, *via* = a way) *Advantage for my self*

83 *sky-robos* the "ambrosial weeds" of line 16 *'Iris' woof*, material dyed in rainbow-colours The goddess *Iris* was a personification of the rainbow comp l. 992 and *Par Lost*, xi 244, "Iris had dipped the woof" Etymologically, *woof* is connected with *web* and *weave* it is short for *on wef* = on-web, i.e. the cross threads laid on the warp of a loom

84 *weeds* see note, l. 16

86 *That to the service, etc* The part of the Spirit was acted by Lawes, first in "sky robes," then in shepherd dress In the dedication of *Comus* by Lawes to Lord Brackley (anonymous edition of 1637), he alludes to the favours that had been shown him by the Bridgewater family In the above lines Milton compliments Lawes and enables Lawes to compliment the Earl (see Introduction)

86 *smooth-dittled sweetly-worded*. 'Ditty' (Lat. *dictatum*) strictly denotes the words of a song as distinct from the musical accompaniment, it is now applied to any little piece intended to be sung comp *Lyc* 32 For a similar panegyric on Lawes' musical genius compare *Son* xiii. The musical alliteration in lines 86-88 should be noted.

87 *knows to still, etc.* comp *Lyc* 10, "he knew Himself to sing"

88 *nor of less faith, etc*, i.e. he is not less faithful than he is skilful in music, and from the nature of his occupation he is most likely to be at hand should any emergency arise.

92 *viewless, invisible* comp *The Passion*, 50, "viewless wing", *Par Lost*, iii 518 Masson calls this a peculiarly Shakespearian word see *M for M* iii 1 124, "To be imprisoned in the viewless winds." The word is obsolete, but poets use great liberty in the formation of adjectives in *less* comp Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*, 'windless clouds' See note, l 574 *charming rod* see note, l 52 also l 653 *rout*, a disorderly crowd The word is also used in the sense of 'defeat,' and is cognate with *route*, *rote*, and *rut* All come from Lat *ruptus*, broken a 'rout' is the breaking up of a crowd, or a crowd broken up, a 'route' is a way broken through a forest, 'rote' is a beaten track, and a 'rut' is a track left by a wheel See *Lyc*. 61, "by the rout that made the hideous roar"

93 *star fold*, the evening star, *Hesperus*, an appellation of the planet *Venus* comp *Lyc* 30 As the morning star (called by Shakespeare the 'unfolding star'), it is called *Phosphorus* or *Lucifer*, the light-bringer Hence Tennyson's allusion

"Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
Sweet *Hesper Phosphor*, double name"—

In Memoriam, cxxi

Lines 93-144 are in rhymed couplets, and consist for the most part of eight syllables each. The prevailing accentuation is iambic.

91 top of heaven, etc., i.e. is far above the horizon. So in *Lyc* 31, it is said to slope "toward heaven's descent," i.e. to sink towards the horizon. Comp. Virgil, *Aen* ii 250, "Round rolls the sky, and on comes Night from the ocean."

95 gilded car. Apollo, as the god of the Sun, rode in a golden chariot. Comp. Chaucer, *Treatise of the Chaucer*, 20S, "Phoebus' golden cart", and "Phoebus' wain," line 190.

96 his glowing axle doth allay. In the *Hymn of the Nativity* Milton alludes to the "burning axle tree" of the sun. comp. *Aen* iv 482, "Atlas *Axem* umero torquet." There is here an allusion to the opinion of the ancients that the setting of the sun in the Atlantic Ocean was accompanied with a noise, as of the sea hissing (Todd). 'Allay' would thus denote 'quench' or 'cool.' *His*, in this line, = *its*. *Its* occurs only three times in Milton's poems, *Od Nat* 106, *Par Lost*, i 254, *Par Lost*, iv 813; the word is found also in Lawes' dedication of *Comus*. The word does not occur in English at all until the end of the sixteenth century, the possessive case of the neuter pronoun *it* and of the masculine *he* being *his*. This gave rise to confusion when the old gender system decayed and the form *its* gradually came into use, until, by the end of the seventeenth century, it was in general use. Milton, however, scarcely recognised it, its place in his involved syntax being taken by the relative pronouns and other connectives, or by *his*, *her*, *thereof*, etc.

97 steep Atlantic stream. To the ancients the Ocean was the great stream that encompassed the earth. *Iliad*, xiv, "the deep flowing Oceanos (*βαθύπποος*)". With this use of 'steep' compare the phrase 'the high seas'.

98 slope sun, sun sunk beneath the horizon, so that the only rays visible shoot up into the sky. *Slope* = *sloped*, also used by Milton as an adverb = *aslope* (*Par Lost*, iv 591), and as a verb (*Lyc* 31).

99 dusky. Milton first wrote 'northern'.

100 Pacing toward the other goal, etc. Comp. *Psalms* xix 5 "The sun as a bridegroom cometh out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."

102 The spirit of lines 102-144 may be contrasted with that of *L'Allegro*, 25-40. Both pieces are calls upon Mirth and Pleasure, and both are therefore suitably expressed in the same tripping

measure and with many similarities of language. But the pleasures of *L'Allegro* begin with the sun rise and yet are "unreproved", these of *Comus* and his crew begin with the darkness and are "unreproved" only if "these dun shades will ne'er report" them. The "light fantastic too" of the one is not the "tipsy dance" of the other, and the laughter and liberty that betoken the absence of "wrinkled Care" have nothing in common with the "midnight shout and revelry" that can be enjoyed only when Rigour, Advice, strict Age, and sour Severity have "gone to bed". The "quips and cranks" of *L'Allegro* have given way to the magic rites of *Comus*, and the wreathed smiles and dimples that adorn the face of innocent Mirth are all replaced by the wine dropping "rosy twine" of revelry.

104 jollity has here its modern sense of boisterous mirth. In Milton occasionally the adjective 'jolly' (Fr *joli*, pretty) has its primary sense of pleasing or festive.

105 Braid your locks with rosy twine, 'entwine your hair with wreaths of roses.'

106 dropping odours comp l. 862-3

108 Advice scrupulous head. 'Advice,' now used chiefly to signify counsel given by another, was formerly used also of self counsel or deliberation. See Chaucer, *Prologue*, 786, "granted him without more advice", and comp Shakespeare, *M of V* i. 2. 6, "Bassanio upon mere advice, Hath sent you here this ring", also *Par Lost*, ii. 376, "Advise, if this be worth Attempting," where 'advise' = consider. See also l. 755, note Scrupulous = full of scruples, conscientious.

110 saws, sayings, maxims. *Saw*, *say*, and *saga* (a Norwegian legend) are cognate.

111 of purer fire, i.e. having a higher or diviner nature. (Or, as there is really no question of degree, we may render the phrase as = divine.) Compare the Platonic doctrine that each element had living creatures belonging to it, those of fire being the gods, similarly the Stoics held that whatever consisted of *pure fire* was divine, e.g. the stars. Hence the additional significance of line 112.

112 the starry quire an allusion to the music of the spheres, see lines 3, 1021. Pythagoras supposed that the planets emitted sounds proportional to their distances from the earth and formed a celestial concert too melodious to affect the "gross unpurged ear" of mankind. comp l. 458 and 41c. 63-73. Shakespeare (*M of V* i. 1. 61) alludes to the music of the spheres.

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young eyed cherubins," etc.

Quire is a form of *choir* (Lat *chorus*, a band of singers), in Greek tragedy the chorus was supposed to represent the sentiments of the audience. *Quire* (of paper) is a totally different word, probably derived from Lat *quatuor*, four

113 *nightly watchful spheres* Milton elsewhere alludes to the stars keeping watch "And all the spangled host keep watch in order bright," *Hymn Nat* 21. 'Nightly,' used as an adjective in the sense of 'nocturnal' comp *Il Pens* 84, "To bless the doors from *nightly* harm", *Arc* 48, "*nightly* ill", and Wordsworth's line "The *nightly* hunter lifting up his eyes." Its ordinary sense is "night by night"

114 *Lead in swift round.* Comp *Arc* 71 "And the low world in measured motion draw, After the heavenly tune"

115 *sounds, straits* A S *sund*, a strait of the sea, so called because it could be *sium* across. See Skeat, *Etym Dict* s v

116 *to the moon, i.e. as affected by the moon* For similar uses of 'to,' comp *Lyc* 33, "tempered *to* the oaten flute", *Lyc* 44, "fanning their joyous leaves *to* thy soft lays" morrice. The waters quiver in the moonlight as if dancing. The morrice = a merris or Moorish dance, brought into Spain by the Moors, and thence introduced into England by John of Gaunt. We read also of a "morris pike"—a weapon used by the Moors in Spain

117 *shelves, flat ledges of rock*

118 *pert, lively* Here used in its radical sense (being a form of *perk*, smart) its modern sense is 'forward' or 'impertinent.' Skeat points out that *perk* and *pert* were both used as verbs, e.g. "*perked* up in a glistering grief," *Henry VIII* ii 3 21. "how it (a child) speaks, and looks, and *perts* up the head," Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, i 1. A similar change of *k* into *t* is seen in E *mate* from M E *make*. *dapper*, quick (Du *dapper*, Ger *tapfer*, brave, quick) It is usual in the sense of 'next'

119 *dimple* *Dimple* is a diminutive of *dip*, and cognate with *dingle* and *dapple*

120 *daisies trim* comp *L'Alleg* 75, "Meadows *trim*, with daisies pied", *Il Pens* 50, "*trim* gardens"

121 *wakes, night-watches* (A S *nicht wacu*, a night wake) The adjective *wakeful* (A S *wacol*) is the exact cognate of the Latin *vigil*. The word was applied to the vigil kept at the dedication of a church, then to the feast connected therewith, and finally to an evening merry making. *prove*, test, judge of (Lat *probari*) This is its sense in older writers and in the much misunderstood phrase—"the exception *proves* the rule," which means that the exception is a test of the rule

124 *Venus now wakes, etc* Spenser, *Brit Ida*, ii 3, has

NOTES

"Night is Love's holyday" In this line *wakens* is used transitively, its object being 'Love'

125 *rights* Here used, as sometimes by Spenser, where modern usage requires *rites* (Lat. *ritus*, a custom) see l. 535

✓126 *daylight sin* Daylight makes sin by revealing it Contrast the sentiment of Comus with that of Milton in *Par Lost*, l. 500, "When night Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons Of Belial"

127 *dun shades* evidently suggested by Fairfax's *Tasso*, ix. 62, "The horrid darkness, and the shadows *dun*" 'Dun' is A.S. *dūnn*, dark

✓129 *Cotyto*, the goddess of Licentiousness here called 'dark veiled' because her midnight orgies were veiled in darkness She was a Thracian divinity, and her worshippers were called Baptae ('sprinkled'), because the ceremony of *initiation* involved the sprinkling of warm water

131 *called, invoked. dragon-womb Of Stygian darkness* The Styx (= 'the abhorred') was the chief river in the lower world. Milton here speaks of *darkness* as something positive, ejected from the womb of Night, Night being represented as a monster of the lower regions comp *Par Lost*, l. 63 The pronoun 'her' shows that 'womb' is here used in its strict sense, but in *Par Lost*, l. 673, "in his *womb* was hid metallic ore," it has the more general sense of "interior" comp the use of Lat *uterus*, *Aen* ii. 258, vii. 499 *dragon* Shakespeare refers to the dragons or 'dragon car' of night, *Cym* ii. 2 48, "Swift, swift, you *dragons* of the night"; *Tro and Cress* v 8 17, "The *dragon* wing of night o'erspreads the earth", see also *Il Pens* 59, "Cynthia checks her dragon yoke."

132. *spets*, a form of *spits* (as *spettle* for *spittle*)

133 one blot, i.e. a universal blot comp *Macbeth*, ii. 2. 63 Milton first wrote, "And makes a blot of nature"

134 *Stay*, here used causally = check The radical sense of the word is 'to support,' as in the substantive *stay* and its plural *stays* *ebon*, black as ebony Ebony is so called because it is hard as a stone (Heb *eben*, a stone), and the wood being of a dark colour, the name has become a synonym both for hardness and for blackness

✓135 *Hecat*, i.e. Hecate (as in line 535) a mysterious Thracian divinity, afterwards regarded as the goddess of witchcraft for these reasons a fit companion for Cotyto and a fit patroness of Comus Jonson calls her "the mistress of witches" She was supposed to send forth at night all kinds of demons and phantoms, and to wander about with the souls of the dead and amidst the howling of dogs

136 utmost end, full completion Compare *L'Alleg* 109, "the corn That ten day-labourers could not end," where 'end' = 'complete'

137 dues see note, l 12.

138 blabbing eastern scout, i.e. the tale telling spy that comes from the East, viz. Morning

139 nice, hard to please, fastidious "a finely chosen epithet, expressing at once *curious* and *squeamish*" (Hurd) It is used by Comus in contempt comp ii. *Henry IV* iv 1, "Hence, there fore, thou *nice* crutch", and see the index to the *Globe Shakespeare* the Indian steep In his *Elegia Tertia* Milton represents the sun as the "light-bringing king" whose home is on the shores of the Ganges (i.e. in the far East) comp "the Indian mount," *Par. Lost*, i 781, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, xxvi, "ere yet the morn Breaks hither over Indian seas"

140 cabined loop-hole an allusion to the first glimpse of dawn, i.e. the peep of day Comp "Out of her window close she blushing peeps," said of the morning (P Fletcher's *Eclogues*), as if the first rays of the sun struggled through some small aperture 'Cabined,' literally 'belonging to a cabin,' and therefore small

141 tell-tale Sun Compare Spenser, *Brit. Ida*, ii 3,

"The thick locked boughs shut out the tell tale sun,
For Venus hated his all blabbing light"

Shakespeare refers to "the tell tale day" (*R of L* 806) In *Odyssey*, viii, we read how Helios (the sun) kept watch and informed Vulcan of Venus's love for Mars descry, etc., i.e. make known our hidden rites 'Descry' is here used in its primary sense = *describe* both words are from Lat *describere*, to write fully In Milton and Shakespeare 'descry' also occurs in the sense of 'to reconnoitre.'

142 solemnity, ceremony, rite The word is from Lat *sollus*, complete, and *annus*, a year, 'solemn' = *solennis* = *sollennis* Hence the changes of meaning (1) recurring at the end of a completed year, (2) usual, (3) religious, for sacred festivals recur at stated intervals, (4) that which is not to be lightly undertaken, i.e. serious or important

143 knit hands, etc Comp *Maſque of Hymen*

"Now, now begin to set
Your spirits in active heat,
And, since your hands are met,
Instruct your numble feet,
In motions swift and meet
The happy ground to beat"

144 light fantastic round comp *L'Alleg* 34, "Come, and trip it, as you go, On the light fantastic toe" A round is a dance or 'measure' in which the dancers join hands 'Fantastic' = full of fancy, unrestrained So Shakespeare uses it of that which has merely been imagined, and has not yet happened It is now used in the sense of grotesque *Fancy* is a form of *fantasy* (Greek *phantasia*)

At this point in the mask Comus and his rout dance a measure, after which he again speaks, but in a different strain The change is marked by a return to blank verse the previous lines are mostly in octosyllabic couplets

145 different, i.e. different from the voluptuous footing of Comus and his crew,

146 footing comp *Lyc.* 103, "Camus, reverend siro, wont footing slow"

147 shrouds, coverts, places of hiding The word etymologically denotes 'something cut off,' being allied to 'shred', hence a garment, and finally (as in Milton) any covering or means of covering Many of Latimer's sermons are described as having been "preached in The Shrouds," a covered place near St Paul's Cathedral The modern use of the word is restricted comp l 316 brakes, bushes Shakespeare has "hawthorn brake," *M N D* iii 1 3, and the word seems to be connected with *bracken*

148 Some virgin sure, sc 'it is'

150 charms wily trains, i.e. spells cunning allurements *Charm* is the Lat *carmen*, a song, also used in the sense of 'magic verses', wily = full of *icilc* (etymologically the same as guile) *Train* here denotes an artifice or snare as in 'venereal trains' (*Sams. Agon* 533) "Oh, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note" (*Com of Errors*, iii 2 45) See Index, *Globe Shakespeare* Some would take 'wily trains' as = trains of wiles

151 ere long ere has here the force of a preposition, in A S it was an adverb as well = soon, but now it is used only as a conjunction or a preposition

153 Thus I hurl, etc "Conceive that at this moment of the performance the actor who personates Comus flings into the air, or makes a gesture as if flinging into the air, some powder which, by a stage device, is kindled so as to produce a flash of blno light In the original draft among the Cambridge MSS the phrase is *powdered spells*, but Milton, by a judicious change, concealing the mechanism of the stage trick, substituted *dazzling*" (Masson)

154 dazzling This implies both brightness and illusion spells A *spell* is properly a magical form of words (A S *spel*, a

saying) here it refers to the whole enchantment employed
spongy air so called because it holds in suspension the magic
powder

155 Of power to cheat and (to) give, etc These lines are
attributive to 'spells' The preposition 'of' is thus used to
denote a characteristic, thus 'of power' = powerful, comp
l 677 blear illusion, deception, that which deceives by *blurring*
the vision. Shakespeare has 'bleared thine eye' = dimmed thy
vision, deceived (*Tam Shrew*, v 1 120) Comp "This may
stand for a pretty superficial argument, to blear our eyes, and
lull us asleep in security" (Sir W Raleigh) *Blur* is another
form of *blear*

156 presentments, appearances. This word is to be dis-
tinguished from *presentiment* A presentiment is a "fore feeling"
(Lat *praesentire*) while a presentment is something presented
(Lat *praesens*, being before) Shakespeare, *Ham.* iii 4 54, has
'presentment' in the sense of picture quaint habits unfamiliar
dress Quaint is from Lat *cognitus*, so that its primary sense is
'known' or 'remarkable' In French it became *coint*, which
was treated as if from Lat *comptus*, neat, hence the word is
frequent in the sense of neat, exact, or delicate. Its modern
sense is 'unusual' or 'odd'

158 suspicious flight flight due to suspicion of danger

- 160 I, under fair pretence etc 'Under the mask of friendly
intentions and with the plausible language of wheedling courtesy,
I insinuate myself into the unsuspecting mind and ensnare it'

161 glozing, flattering, wheedling Compare *Par Lost*, ix
549,

"So glozed the temper, and his poem tuned
Into the heart of Eve his words made way"

Gloze is from the old word *glose*, a gloss or explanation (Gr
glossa, the tongue) hence also glossary, glossology, etc Trench,
in his lecture on the Morality of Words, points out how often fair
names are given to ugly things it is in this way that a word
which merely denoted an explanation has come to denote a false
explanation, an endeavour to deceive. The word has no con-
nection with *gloss* = brightness.

162 Baited, rendered attractive Radically *bait* is the
causative of *bite* hence a trap is said to be baited Comp *Sams*
Ag 1066, "The bait of homed words."

163 wind me, etc. The verbs *wind* (i.e. coil) and *lug* suggest
the cunning of the serpent The easy hearted man is the person
whose heart or mind is easily overcome 'man' is here used
generically Burton, in *Anal of Mel*, says 'The devil being
a slender incomprehensible spirit, can easily insinuate and wind

himself into human bodies." *Me* is here used reflexively see note, 1 61 This is not the ethnic dative

165 *virtue*, i.e. power or influence (Lat *virtus*) This radical sense is still found in the phrase 'by virtue of' = by the power of. The adjective *virtuous* is now used only of moral excellence in line 621 it has its older meaning

166 The reading of the text is that of the editions of 1637 and 1645 In the edition of 1673 the reading was

"I shall appear some harmless villager,
And hearken, if I may, her business here
But here she comes, I fairly step aside "

But in the errata there was a direction to omit the comma after *may*, and to change *here* into *hear* In Masson's text, accordingly, he reads "And hearken, if I may her business hear "

167 keeps up, etc., i.e. keeps occupied with his country affairs even up to a late hour *Gear* its original sense is 'preparation' (A.S. *gearu*, ready), hence 'business' or 'property' Comp Spenser, *F* Q vi. 3 6, "That to Sir Calidore was *easy gear*," i.e. an easy matter fairly, softly *Fair* and *softly* were two words which went together, signifying *gently* (Warton)

170 mine ear My best guide Observe the juxtaposition of *mine* and *my* in these lines *Mine* is frequent before a vowel, especially when the possessive adjective is not emphatic. In Shakespeare 'mine' is almost always found before "eye," "ear," etc., where no emphasis is intended (Abbott, § 237)

171 Methought, i.e. it seemed to me In the verb 'methinks' *me* is the dative, and *thin's* is an impersonal verb (A.S. *thincan*, to appear), quite distinct from the causal verb 'I think,' which is from A.S. *thencan*, to make to appear

173 jocund, merry Comp *L'Allegro*, 94, "the *jocund* rebecks sound" *gamesome*, lively This word, like many other adjectives in *-some*, is now less common than it was in Elizabethan English many such adjectives are obsolete, e.g. *laboursome*, *joysome*, *quiescent*, etc (see Trench's *English, Past and Present*, v)

174 unlettered hinds, ignorant-rustics (A.S. *hina*, a domestic)

175 granges, granaries, barns (Lat *granum*, grain) The word is now applied to a farm house with its outhouses

176 Pan, the god of everything connected with pastoral life see *Arc* 106, "Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were "

177 thank the gods amiss *Amis* stands for M E *on misse* = in error "Perhaps there is a touch of Puritan rigour in this. The gods should be thanked in solemn acts of devotion, and not by merry making" (Keightley) See Introduction

178 swilled insolence, etc., i.e. the drunken rudeness of those carousing at this late hour *Swill* to swill is to drink greedily, hence to drink like a pig wassailers, from 'wassail' [A.S. *waes hael*, from *waes*, be thou, and *hael*, whole (modern English *hale*)], a form of salutation, used in drinking one's health, and hence employed in the sense of 'revelling' or 'carousing'. The 'wassail bowl' here referred to is the "spiey nutbrown ale" of *L'Allegro*, 100. In Scott's *Ivanhoe*, the Friar drinks to the Black Knight with the words, "*Waes hale*, Sir Sluggish Knight," the Knight replying "Drink *hale*, Holy Clerk."

180 inform feet. Comp *Sams Agon* 335 "luther hath informed your younger feet." This use of 'inform' (=direct) is well illustrated in Spenser's *F Q* vi 6 "Which with sage counsel, when they went astray, He could *enforme*, and then reduce aright."

184 spreading favour Epithet transferred from cause to effect

187 kind hospitable woods an instance of the pathetic fallacy which attributes to inanimate objects the feelings of men comp *Il* 194, 195 *As* in this line (after *such*) has the force of a relative pronoun.

188 grey-hooded Even. Comp "sandals grey," *Lyc* 187, "civil suited," *Il Pens* 122, both applied to morning

189 a sad votarist, etc. A votarist is one who is bound by a vow (Lat *rotum*) the current form is *rotary*, applied in a general sense to one devoted to an object, e.g. a votary of science. In the present case, the votarist is a *palmer*, i.e. a pilgrim who carried a palm branch in token of his having been to Palestine. Such would naturally wear sober coloured or homely garments comp Drayton, "a palmer poor in homely russet clad." In *Par Reg* xiv 426, Morning is a pilgrim clad in "amice grey." On weed, see note, l 16

190 hindmost wheels comp l 95 "If this fine image is optically realised, what we see is Evening succeeding Day as the figure of a venerable grey hooded mendicant might slowly follow the wheels of some rich man's chariot" (Masson)

192 labour thoughts, the burden of my thoughts

193 engaged, committed this use of the word may be compared with that in *Hamlet*, iii 3 69, "Art more *engaged*." (= bound or entangled) To *engage* is to bind by a *gage* or pledge

195 stole stolen This use of the past form for the participle is frequent in Elizabethan English. Else, etc. The meaning is "The envious darkness must have stolen my brothers, *otherwise* why should night hide the light of the stars?" The clause 'but for some felonious end' is therefore to some extent tautologous

197 dark lantern. The stars by a far fetched metaphor are said to be concealed, though not extinguished, just as the light of a dark lantern is shut off by a slide. Comp More, "Vice is like a dark lanthorn, which turns its bright side only to him that bears it"

198 everlasting oil. Comp *F Q* : 1 57

"By this the eternal lamps, wherewith high Jove
Doth light the lower world, were half yspent"

also *Macbeth*, ii 1 5, "There's husbandry in heaven, Their candles are all out." There is here an irregularity of syntax "That Nature hung in heaven" is a relative clause co ordinate in sense with the next clause, but by a change of thought the phrase "and filled their lamps" is treated as a principal clause, and a new object is introduced comp 1 6

203 rife, prevalent perfect, distinct, see note, 1 73

204 single darkness, darkness only *Single* is from the same base as *simple*, comp 1. 369

205 What might this be? This is a direct question about a past event, and has the same meaning as "what should it be?" in line 482 see note there A thousand fantasies, etc On this passage Lowell says "That wonderful passage in *Comus* of the airy tongues, perhaps the most imaginative in suggestion he ever wrote, was conjured out of a dry sentence in Purchas's abstruse of Marco Polo Such examples help us to understand the poet" Reference may also be made to the *Anat of Mel* "Fear makes our imagination conceive what it list, and tyrannizeth over our fantasy more than all other affections, especially in the dark", also to the song prefixed to the same work, "My phantasmie presents a thousand ugly shapes," etc On the power of imagination or phantasy, Shakespeare says

"As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to any thing
A local habitation and a name"—*M N D* v 1-14

Compare also Ben Jonson's *Vision of Delight*

"Break, Phant'sie, from thy cave of cloud,
And spread thy purple wings,
Now all thy figures are allow'd,
And various shapes of things
Create of airy forms a stream
And though it be a waking dream," etc.

207 Of calling shapes, etc. In Heywood's *Hierarchy of Angels* there is a reference to travellers seeing strange shapes beckoning to them Such words as 'shapes,' 'shadows,' 'airy tongues,' etc, illustrate Milton's power to create an indefinite, yet ex

pressive picture Comp *Aen* iv 460 beckoning shadows dire.
A characteristic arrangement of words in Milton comp lines 470, 945

203 syllable, pronounce distinctly

210 may startle well, may well startle

212 siding champion, Conscience To side is to take a side, and hence to assist comp *Cor* iv 2 2 "The nobles who have sided in his behalf" 'Conscience' (here a trisyllable) is used in its current sense in *Son* xxii. 10 it means consciousness Comp *Hen VIII* iii. 2 379 "A peace above all earthly dignities, A still and quiet Conscience"

213 pure-eyed Faith Comp *Lyc.* 81, "those pure eyes And perfect witness of all judging Jove", also the Scriptural words, "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" The maiden, whose safeguard is her purity, calls on Faith, Hope, and Chastity, each being characterised by an epithet denoting purity of thought and act, viz. 'pure eyed,' 'white handed,' and 'unblemished' The placing of Chastity instead of Charity in the trio is significant see 1 *Cor* xiii

214 hovering angel Hope hovers over the maiden to protect her The word 'hover' is found frequently in the sense of 'shelter' girl, surrounded golden wings In *R Pens* 52, Contemplation "soars on golden wing"

216 see ye visibly, i.e. you are not mere shapes, but living presences Ye here the object of the verb "Thus confusion between ye and you did not exist in old English, ye was always used as a nominative, and you as a dative or accusative In the English Bible the distinction is very carefully observed, but in the dramatists of the Elizabethan period there is a very loose use of the two forms" (Morris) It is so in Milton, who has ye as nominative, accusative, and dative, comp lines 513, 967, 1020, also *Arc* 40, 81, 101 It may be noted that ye can be pronounced more rapidly than you, and is therefore frequent when an unaccented syllable is required.

217 the Supreme Good God being the Supreme Good, if evil exists, it must exist for God's purposes Evil exists for the sake of 'vengeance' or punishment

219 glistening guardian, i.e. one clad in the 'pure ambrosial weeds' of l 16 *Glister, glisten, glitter*, and *glint* are cognate words.

221 Was I deceived? There is a break in the construction at the end of line 220 The girl's trust in Heaven is suddenly strengthened by a glimpse of light in the dark sky Warton regards the repetition of the same words in lines 223, 224 as beautifully expressing the confidence of an unaccusing conscience.

222 her = its. In Latin *nubes*, a cloud, is feminine

223 does turn and casts Comp *Il Pens* 46, 'doth diet' and 'hears' When two coordinate verbs are of the same tense and mood the auxiliary verb should apply to both. The above construction is due probably to change of thought

225 tufted grove Comp *L'Alleg* 78 "bosomed high in tufted trees"

226 hallo Also *hallow* (as in Milton's editions), *halloo*, *halloa*, and *holloa*

227 make to be heard. Make = cause

228 new enlivened spirits, i. e. my spirits that have been newly enlivened for the form of the compound adjective comp note, l. 36

229 they, i. e. the brothers

230 Echo In classical mythology she was a nymph whom Juno punished by preventing her from speaking before others or from being silent after others had spoken She fell in love with Narcissus, and pined away until nothing remained of her but her voice. Compare the invocation to Echo in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, i. 1

The lady's song, which has been described as "an address to the very Genus of Sound," is here very naturally introduced The lady wishes to rouse the echoes of the wood in order to attract her brothers' notice, and she does so by addressing Echo, who grieves for the lost youth Narcissus as the lady grieves for her lost brothers

231 thy airy shell, the atmosphere Comp "the hollow round of Cynthia's seat," *Hymn Nat* 103 The marginal reading in the MS is *cell* Some suppose that 'shell' is here used, like Lat *concha*, because in classical times various musical instruments were made in the form of a shell.

232 Meander's margent green Maeander, a river of Asia Minor, remarkable for the windings of its course, hence the verb 'to meander,' and hence also (in Keightley's opinion) the mention of the river as a haunt of Echo It is more probable, however, that, as the lady addresses Echo as the "Sweet Queen of Parley" and the unhappy lover of the lost Narcissus, the river is here mentioned because of its associations with music and misfortune The Marsyas was a tributary of the Maeander, and the legend was that the flute upon which Marsyas played in his rash contest with Apollo was carried into the Maeander and, after being thrown on land, dedicated to Apollo, the god of song Comp *Lyc.* 58 63, where the Muses and misfortune are similarly associated by a reference to Orpheus, whose 'gory visage' and lyre were carried "down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore,"

Further, the Maeander is associated with the sorrows of the maiden Byblis, who seeks her lost brother Caunus (called by Ovid *Maeandrius juvenis*) [Since the above was written, Prof J. W. Hales has given the following explanation of Milton's allusion "The real reason is that the Meander was a famous haunt of swans, and the swan was a favourite bird with the Greek and Latin writers—ono to whose sweet singing they perpetually allude" (*Athenaeum*, April 20, 1889)] 'Margent.' *Marge* and *maryin* are forms of the same word.

233 the violet-embroidered vale The notion that flowers broder or ornament the ground is common in poetry comp *Par Lost*, iv 700 "Under foot the violet, Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay Brodered the ground" In *Lyc.* 148, the flowers themselves wear 'embroidery' The nightingale is made to haunt a violet-embroidered vale because these flowers are associated with love (see Jonson's *Masque of Hymen*) and with innocence (see *Hamlet*, iv 5 158 "I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died") Prof Hales, however, thinks that some particular vale is here alluded to, and argues, with much acumen, that the poet referred to the woodlands close by Athens to the north west, through which the Cephissus flowed, and where stood the birth place of Sophocles, who sings of his native Colonus as frequented by nightingales The same critic regards the epithet 'violet embroidered' as a translation of the Greek *ιοστέφανος* (=crowned with violets), frequently applied by Aristophanes to Athens, of which Colonus was a suburb Macaulay also refers to Athens as "the violet crowned city" It is, at least, very probable that Milton might here associate the nightingale with Colonus, as he does in *Par Req* iv 245 see the following note

234 love lorn nightingale, the nightingale whose loved ones are lost comp Virgil, *Georg* iv 511 "As the nightingale wailing in the poplar shade plains for her lost young, while she weeps the night through, and sitting on a bough, reproduces her piteous melody, and fills the country round with the plaints of her sorrow" *Lorn* and *lost* are cognate words, the former being common in the compound *forlorn* see note, l 39 Milton makes frequent allusion to the nightingale in *Il Penseroso* it is 'Philomel', in *Par Req* iv 245, it is 'the Attic bird', and in *Par Lost* viii 518, it is 'the amorous bird of night' He calls it the Attic bird in allusion to the story of Philomela, the daughter of Pandion King of Athens. Near the Academy was Colonus, which Sophocles has celebrated as the haunt of nightingales (Browne) Philomela was changed, at her own prayer, into a nightingale that she might escape the vengeance of her brother in law Tereus The epithet 'love lorn,' however seems to point to the legend of Aëdon (Greek ἀηδών, a nightingale), who, having

killed her own son by mistake, was changed into a nightingale, whose mournful song was represented by the Greek poets as the lament of the mother for her child

235, her sad song mourneth, & e sings her plaintive melody
'Sad song' forms a kind of cognate accusative.

237 likest thy Narcissus Narcissus, who failed to return the love of Echo, was punished by being made to fall in love with his own image reflected in a fountain this he could never approach, and he accordingly pined away and was changed into the flower which bears his name See the dialogue between Mercury and Echo in *Cynthia's Revels*, 1 1 Grammatically, *likest* is an adjective qualified adverbially by "(to) thy Narcissus" comp *Il Pens* 9, "likest hovering dreams"

238 have hid. This is not a grammatical inaccuracy (as Warton thinks), but the subjunctive mood

240 Tell me but where, & e 'Only tell me where

241 Sweet Queen of Parley, etc 'Parley is conversation (fr *parler*, to speak) *parlour*, *parole*, *palaver*, *parliament*, *par lance*, etc., are cognate Daughter of the Sphere, & e of the sphere which is her "airy shell" (l 231) comp "Sphere born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse" (*At a Solemn Music*, 2)

243 give resounding grace, etc, & e add the charm of echo to the music of the spheres.

The metrical structure of this song should be noted the lines vary in length from two to six feet The rhymes are few, and the effect is more striking owing to the consonance of *shell*, *well* with *rail*, *nightingale*, also of *pan*, *where* with *are* and *sphere*, and of *have* with *care* Masson regards this song as a striking illustration of Milton's free use of imperfect rhymes, even in his most musical passages

244 mortal mixture divine enchanting ravishment. The words *mortal* and *divine* are in antithesis comp *Il Pens* 91, 92, "The immortal mind that hath forsook Her mansion in this fleshly nook" The lines embody a compliment to the Lady Alice read in this connection lines 555 and 564 'Ravishment,' *ecstasy* (a cognate word) or *ecstasy* comp *Il Pens* 40, "Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes", also l 794

246 Sure, used adverbially comp line 493, and 'certain,' l 266

247 vocal, used proleptically

248 his = its see note, l 96 The pronoun refers to 'some thing holy'

251 smoothing the raven down. As the nightingale's song smooths the rugged brow of Night (*Il Pens* 58), so here the song

of the lady smooths the raven plumage of darkness In classical mythology Night is a winged goddess

252 it, i.e. darkness

253, Circe Sirens three In the *Odyssey* the Sirens are two in number and have no connection with Circe. They lived on a rocky island off the coast of Sicily and near the rock of Scylla (l 257), and lured sailors to destruction by the charm of their song Circe was also a sweet singer and had the power of enchanting men, hence the combined allusion see also Horace's *Epist* 1. 2, 23, *Sirenum voces, et Circeae pocula nostri* Besides, the Sirens were daughters of the river god Aechelous, and Circe had Naiads or fountain nymphs among her maids.

254 flowery-kirtled Nalades fresh water nymphs dressed in flowers, or having their skirts decorated with flowers. A *kirtle* is a gown, Skeat suggests that it is a diminutive of *skirt*

255 baleful, injurious (A S *bala*, evil)

256 sung "The verbs *swim, begin, run, drink, shrink, sink, ring, sing, spring*, have for their proper past tenses *swam, began, ran*, etc., preserving the original *a*, but in older writers (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) and in colloquial English we find forms with *u*, which have come from the passive participles." (Morris) take the prisoned soul, i.e. would take the soul prisoner, 'prisoned' being used proleptically

257 lap it in Elysium. *Lap* is a form of wrap comp *L'Alleg* 136, "*Lap* me in soft Lydian airs" Elysium the abode of the spirits of the blessed, comp *L'Alleg* 147, "herped Elysian flowers" Scylla Charybdis The former, a rival of Circe in the affections of the sea god Glaucus, was changed into a monster surrounded by barking dogs She threw herself into the sea and became a rock, the noise of the surrounding waves ("multis circum latrantibus undis," *Aen* vii 588) resembling the barking of dogs. The latter was a daughter of Poseidon, and was hurled by Zeus into the sea, where she became a whirlpool

260 slumber comp *Pericles*, v 1 335, "thick slumber Hangs upon mine eyes"

261 madness, ecstasy The same idea is expressed in *Il Pens* 161 "As may with sweetness, through mine ear, Dissolve me into *ecstasies*, And bring all heaven before mine eyes" In Shakespeare 'ecstasy' occurs in the sense of madness, see *Hamlet*, iii 1 167 "That unmatched form and feature of blown youth, Blasted with *ecstasy*", *Temp* iii 3 108, "hinder them from what this *ecstasy* May now provoke them to" - comp also "the pleasure of that madness," *Wint Tale*, v 3 73 See also l 625

262 home-felt, deeply felt, Compare "The *home* thrust of a

friendly sword is sure" (Dryden), "This is a consideration that comes home to our interest" (Addison) see also Index to Globe *Shakespeare*.

263 waking bliss, as opposed to the ecstatic slumber induced by the song of Circe

265 Hail, foreign wonder! Warton notes that *Comus* is universally allowed to have taken some of its tints from the *Tempest*, and quotes, "O you wonder! If you be maid, or no?"
L 2 426

266 certain see note, l 246

267 Unless the goddess, etc = unless *thou* be the goddess that in rural shrine dwells here Here, as often in Latin, we have 'unless' (Lat *nisi*, etc) used with a single word instead of a clause and, also as in Latin, the verb in the relative clause has the person of the antecedent.

268 Pan or Sylvan see l 176 also *Il Pens* 134, "shadows brown that Sylvan loves," and *Arc* 106, "Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were" Sylvanus, the god of fields and forests, as denoted by his name which is corrupted from Silvan (Lat *silva*, a wood)

269 Forbidding, etc These lines recall the language of *Arcades*, in which also a lady is complimented as "a deity," "a rural Queen," and "mistress of yon princely shrine" in the land of Pan. There is a reference also to her protecting the woods through her servant, the Genius *Arc.* 36 53, 91-95

271 ill is lost A Latin idiom (as Keightley points out) = *male perditur* Prof. Masson, however, would regard it as equivalent to "there is little loss in losing"

273 extreme shift, last resource Comp l 617

274 my severed company a condensed expression = the companions separated from me Comp l 315 this figure of speech is called Synecdoche

277 What chance, etc In lines 277 290 we have a reproduction of that form of dialogue employed in Greek tragedy in which question and answer occupy alternate lines it is called *stichomythia*, and is admirable when there is a gradual rise in excitement towards the end (as in the *Supplices* of Euripides) In *Samson Agonistes*, which is modelled on the Greek pattern, Milton did not employ it

278 An alliterative line

279 near ushering, closely attending To usher is to introduce (Lat *ostium*, a door)

284 twain thus frequently used as a predicate It is also

used after its substantive as in *Lyc* 110, "of metals *titan*," and as a substantive

285 forestalling, anticipating 'Forestall,' originally a marketing term, is to buy up goods before they have been displayed at a *stall* in the market in order to sell them again at a higher price hence 'to anticipate' prevented 'Prevent,' now used in the sense of 'hinder,' seems in this line to have something of its older meaning, viz., to anticipate (in which case 'forestalling' would be proleptic) Comp *l.* 362, *Par Lost*, vi 129, "half-way he met His daring foe, at this *prevention* more Incensed "

286 to hit. This is the gerundial infinitive after an adjective comp "good to eat," "deadly to hear," etc.

287 Imports their loss, etc. 'Apart from the present emergency, is the loss of them important?'

289 manly prime, etc. 'Were they in the prime of manhood, or were they merely youths?' With Milton the 'prime of manhood' is where 'youth' ends comp *Par Lost*, vi 245, "*prime* in manhood where youth ended", iii. 636, "a stripling Cherub he appears, Not of the prime, yet such as in his face Youth smiled celestial" Spenser has 'prime' = Spring

290 Hebe, the goddess of youth "The down of manhood" had not appeared on the lips of the brothers

291 what time common in poetry for 'when' (Lat *quo tempore*) Compare Horace, *Od* iii 6 "what time the sun shifted the shadows of the mountains, and took the yokes from the wearied oxen" laboured wearied with labour

292 loose traces Because no longer taut from the draught of the plough

293 swinked, overcome with toil, fatigued (A S *swincan*, to toil) Skeat points out that this was once an extremely common word, the sense of toil is due to that of constant movement from the *swinging* of the labourer's arms In Chaucer 'swinker' = ploughman.

294 mantling, spreading To mantle is strictly to cloak or cover comp *Temp* v 1 67, "fumes that *mantle* Their clearer reason "

297 port, bearing, men

298 faery This spelling is nearer to that of the M E. *faerie* than the current form.

299 the element, the air Since the time of the Greek philosopher Empedocles, fire, earth, air, and water have been popularly called the four elements, when used alone, however, 'the element' commonly means 'the air' Comp *Hen V* i 1 107, "The *element* shows him as it doth to me", *Par Lost*, ii

490, "the louring *element* Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow or shower," etc

301 plighted, interwoven or *planted* The verb 'plight' (or more properly *plite*) is a variant of *plait* see *Il Pens* 57, "her sweetest saddest *plight*" The word has no connection with 'plight,' l 372 awe strook Milton uses three forms of the participle, viz. 'strook,' 'struck,' and 'strucken.'

302 worshiped. The final consonant is now doubled in such verbs before *-ed*

303 were = would be subjunctive like the path to Heaven, i.e. it would be a pleasure to help, etc. There is (probably) no allusion to the Scripture parable of the narrow and difficult way to Heaven (*Matt* vii) as in *Son* ix, "labours up the hill of heavenly Truth"

304 help you find comp l. 623 The simple infinitive is here used without *to* where *to* would now be inserted This omission of the preposition now occurs with so few verbs that 'to' is often called the sign of the infinitive, but in Early English the only sign of the infinitive was the termination *en* (e.g. he can *speken*). The infinitive, being used as a noun, had a *dativæ* form called the gerund, which was preceded by the preposition *to*, and when this became confused with the simple infinitive the use of *to* became general Comp *Son* x 4, "*Help* waste a sullen day"

305 readiest way Here 'readiest' logically belongs to the predicate

311 each every see note, l. 19 alley, a walk or avenue.

312 Dingle bushy dell bosky bourn. 'Dingle' = dimble (see Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*) = dimple = a little dip or depression, hence a narrow valley 'Dell' = dale, literally a cleft, hence a valley, not so deep as a dingle 'Bosky bourn,' a stream whose banks are bushy or thickly grown with bushes 'Bourn,' a boundary, is a distinct word etymologically, but the phrase "from side to side," as used by Comus, might well imply that the valley as well as the stream is here referred to 'Bosky,' bushy The noun 'boscase' = jungle or *bush* (M E *busch*, *bush*, *bush*) See Tennyson's *Dream of F W* 243, "the sombre *boscase* of the wood"

315 stray attendance = strayed attendants, abstract for concrete, as in line 274 Comp *Par Lost*, x. 80, "*Attendance* none shall need, nor train", vii 132, "Of herds, and flocks, and numerous *servitude*" (= servants)

316 shroud, etc. Milton first wrote "within these shroudie limits" see note, l 147

317 low-roosted lark, i.e. the lark that has roosted on the ground This is certainly Milton's meaning, as he refers to the

bird as rising from its "thatched pallet" = its nest, which is built on the ground 'Roost' has, however, no radical connection with *rest*, but denotes a perch for fowls, and Keightley's remark that Milton is guilty of supposing the lark to sleep, like a hen, upon a perch or roost, may therefore be noticed But the poets' meaning is obvious Prof Masson takes 'thatched' as referring to the texture of the nest or to the corn stalks or rushes over it.

318 rouse Here used intransitively = awake.

322. honest-offered see notes, ll 36, 228

323 sooner, more readily

324 tapestry halls Halls hung with tapestry, tapestry being "a kind of carpet work, with wrought figures, especially used for decorating walls" The word is said to be from the Persian.

325 first was named The meaning is 'Courtesy which is derived from *court*, and which is still nominally most common in high life, is nevertheless most readily found amongst those of humble station' This sentiment is becoming in the mouth of Lady Alice when addressed to a humble shepherd 'Courtesy' (or, as Milton elsewhere writes, *courtship*) has, like *civility*, lost much of its deeper significance Comp Spenser, *F Q* vi 1 1

"Of Court it seems men Courtesy do call,
For that it there most useth to abound."

327 less warranted, i.e. when I have less guarantee of safety *Guarantee* and *warrant*, like *guard* and *ward*, *quile* and *woile*, are radically the same

329 Eye me, i.e. look on me To *cye* a person now usually implies watching narrowly or suspiciously *square*, accommodate, adjust The adj 'proportioned' is here used proleptically, denoting the result of the action indicated by the verb 'square' Comp *M for M* v 1 "Thou'rt said to have a stubborn soul, And *squar'st* thy life accordingly" *Exeunt*, i.e. they go out, they leave the stage

331 Unmuffle uncover yourselves To *muffle* is to cover up, c.g. 'to muffle the throat,' 'a muffled sound,' etc. *Muffle* (subst) is a diminutive of *muff*

332. wont'st, i.e. art wont *Wont'st* is here apparently the 2nd person singular, present tense, of a verb *to wont* = to be accustomed, hence also the participle *wonted* (*M Pens* 37, "keep thy wonted state") But the M.E. verb was *wonen*, to dwell or be accustomed, and its participle *woned* or *wont* The fact that *wont* was a participle being forgotten, it was treated as a distinct verb, and a new participle formed, viz. *wonted* (= *won ed ed*), from this again comes the noun *wontedness* Milton, however, uses *wont* as a present only twice in his poetry as in modern English he uses it as a noun (= custom) or as a participial adj

with the verb *to be* (*Il Pens* 123, "As she was wont") benison, blessing radically the same as 'benediction' (Lat *benedictio*)

333 stoop thy pale visage, etc Comp 1 1023 and *Il Pens* 72, "Stooping through a fleecy cloud" 'Visage,' a word now mostly used with a touch of contempt, in Milton simply denotes 'face' see *Il Pens* 13, "saintly visage", *Lyc* 62, "His gory visage down the stream was sent." amber comp *L'Alleg* 61, "Robed in flames and amber light," and Tennyson

"What time the amber morn

Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud "

334 disinherit, drive out, dispossess. Comp *Two Gent* iii 2 87, "Thus or else nothing, will inherit (i.e. obtain possession of) her "

336 influence dammed up The verb here shows that influence is employed in its strict sense, = a flowing in (Lat *in* and *fluo*) it was thus used in astrology to denote "an *influent* course of the planets, their virtue being infused into, or their course working on, inferior creatures", comp *L'Alleg* 112, "whose bright eyes Rain influence", *Par Lost*, iv 669, "with kindly heat Of various influence" Astrology has left many traces upon the English language, e.g. influence, disastrous, ill starred, ascendant, etc See also l 360

337 taper, here a vocative, the verb being "visit (thou) "

338 though a rush candle, i.e. 'though it be only a rush candle', a rush light, obtained from the pith of a rush dipped in oil

340 long levelled rule, straight horizontal beam of light comp *Par Lost*, iv 513, "the setting sun Lerelled his evening rays" The instrument with which straight lines are drawn is called a *rule* or ruler

341 star of Arcady Or Tyrian Cynosure, here put by synecdoche for 'lode star' More particularly, the star of Arcady signifies any of the stars in the constellation of the Great Bear, by which Greek sailors steered, and 'Tyrian Cynosure' signifies the stars comprising that part of the constellation of the Lesser Bear which, from its shape, was called *Cynosūra*, the dog's tail (Greek *κυνὸς οὐρά*), and by which Phœnician or Tyrian sailors steered See *L'Alleg* 80, "The cynosure of neighbouring eyes," where the word is used as a common noun = point of attraction Both constellations are connected in Greek mythology with the Arcadian nymph Callisto, who was turned by Zeus into the Great Bear, while her son Arcas became the Lesser Bear Milton follows the Roman poets in associating these stars with Arcadia on this account

343 barred, debarred or barred from

344 wattled cotes enclosures made of hurdles, i.e. frames of

planted twigs. *Cote*, *cot*, and *coat* are varieties of the same word = a covering or enclosure

345 *oaten stops* see *Lyc.* 33, "the *oaten* flute", 88, "But now my *oat* proceeds", 188, "the tender *stops* of various *quills*" The shepherd's pipe, being at first a row of oaten stalks, "the oaten pipe," "oat," etc., came to denote any instrument of this kind and even to signify "pastoral poetry" The 'stops' are the holes over which the player's fingers are placed, also called vent holes or "ventages" (*Ham* iii 2. 372) See also note on 'azurn,' l 893

346 *whistle* *lodge*, i.e. the sound of the shepherd calling his dog by whistling Or it may be used in the same sense as in *L'Alleg* 63, "the ploughman *whistles* o'er the furrowed land."

347 *Count* *dames* comp *L'Alleg* 52, "the cock Stoutly struts his *dames* before", 114, "Ere the first cock his matin rings" Grammatically, 'count' (infinitive) forms with 'cock' the complex object of 'might hear'

349 *innumerable*, *innumerable* (Lat *innumerus*) Comp *Par Lost*, vii. 455, "*Innumerable* living creatures", ix. 1089

350 *hapless*, *unfortunate* Many words, such as happy, lucky, fortunate, etc., which strictly refer to a person's *hup* or chance, whether good or bad, have become restricted to good hap in order to give them an unfavourable meaning a negative prefix or suffix is necessary

With reference to the word *fortune*, Max Müller says "We speak of good and evil fortune, so did the French, and so did the Romans. By itself *fortuna* was taken either in a good or a bad sense, though it generally meant good fortune Whenever there could be any doubt, the Romans defined *fortuna* by such adjectives as *bona*, *secunda*, *prospera*, for good, *mala* or *adversa* for bad fortune *Fortuna* came to mean something like chance"

351 *her*, *herself* On the reflexive use of *her*, see note, l 163

352 *burs*, *burrs*, prickly seed-vessels of certain plants, e.g. the burr thistle, the burdock (= the burr dock), etc

355 *leans* As Milton frequently omits the nominative, we may supply *she* otherwise *leans* would be intransitive and its nominative 'head' see note, l 715 *fraught*, *freighted*, *filled* *Freight* is itself a later form of *fraught* in *Sam's Agon*, 1075, *fraught* is a noun (Ger *fracht*, a load) See line 732

356. *What*, etc The ellipses may be supplied thus "What (shall be done) if (she be) in wild amazement?"

358 *savage* *hunger* 'Hunger' is put by synecdoche for hungry animals

359 over-exquisite, i.e. too curious, over-inquisitive *Exquisite* is here used in the sense of *inquisitive*, in modern English 'exquisite' has a passive sense only, while 'inquisitive' has an active sense (Lat *quaero*, to seek) see note, l 714.

"The dialogue between the two brothers is an amicable contest between fact and philosophy The younger draws his arguments from common apprehension, and the obvious appearance of things, the elder proceeds on a profounder knowledge, and argues from abstracted principles Here the difference of their ages is properly made subservient to a contrast of character" (Warton)

360 To cast the fashion, i.e. to prejudge the form 'To cast' was common in the sense of to calculate or compute, see Shakespeare, II. *Henry IV* 1 1 166, "You cast the event of war" Some think, however, that the word has here its still more restricted sense as used in astrology, e.g. "to cast a nativity", others see in it a reference to the founder's art, and others to medical diagnosis

361 Grant they be so a concessive clause = granted that the evils turn out to be what you imagined. The alternative is given in l 364.

362. What need, etc., i.e. why should a man anticipate his hour of sorrow 'What' = for what (Lat *quid*) comp l 752, also *On Shakespeare*, 6, "What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?" On the verb *need* Abbott, § 297, says "It is often found with 'what,' where it is sometimes hard to say whether 'what' is an adverb and 'need' a verb, or 'what' an adjective and 'need' a noun 'What need the bridge much broader than the flood?' *Of Ado*, 1 1 318, either 'why need the bridge (be) broader?' or 'what need is there (that) the bridge (be) broader'"

363 Compare Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "rather bear those ills we have," etc., and Pope's *Essay on Man*, "Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate," etc

366 to seek, at a loss Compare *Par Lost*, viii. 197 "Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek." Bacon, in *Adv of Learning*, has "Men bred in learning are perhaps to seek in points of convenience"

367 unprincipled in virtue's book, i.e. ignorant of the elements of virtue. A principle (Lat *principium*, beginning) is a fundamental truth, hence the current sense of 'unprincipled,' implying that the man who has no fixed rules of life is the one who will readily fall into evil Comp *Sams Agon* 760, "wisest and best men with goodness principled"

368 bosoms, holds within itself The nom is 'goodness' 'Peace' is governed by 'in,' l 367

369 As that, etc. This is an adverbial clause of consequence to 'unprincipled', in modern English such a clause would be introduced by 'that,' and in Elizabethan English either by 'as' or 'that' Here we have both connectives together single see note, l. 204 noise, sound

370 Not being in danger, i.e. she not being in danger absolute construction This parenthetical line is equivalent to a conditional clause—"if she be not in danger, the mere want of light and noise need not disquiet her"

371 constant, steadfast

372. misbecoming see note on 'misused,' l. 47 plight, condition. Skeat derives this word from A S *pliht*, danger, others connect it with *pledge* It is distinct from *plight*, l. 301

373 Virtue could see, etc. The best commentary on this line is in lines 381-5 comp Spenser "Virtue gives herself light through darkness for to wade," *F Q* i l. 12

375 flat sea comp *Lyc.* 98, "level brine" Lat *aequor*, a flat surface, used of the sea.

376 seeks to, applies herself to This use of seek is common in the English Bible see *Deut* xii 5, "unto his habitation shall ye seek", *Isaiah*, viii 19, xi. 10, xix 3, i *Kings*, x 24

377 her best nurse, Contemplation The wise man loves contemplation and solitude comp *Il Penseroso*, 51, where "the Cherub Contemplation" is the "first and chiefest" of Melancholy's companions. In Sidney's *Arcadia*, "Solitariness" is "the nurse of these contemplations"

378 plumes Some would read *prunes*, both words being used of a bird's smoothing or trimming its feathers—or (more strictly) picking out damaged feathers See Skeat's *Dictionary*, and compare Pope's line, "Where Contemplation *prunes* her ruffled wings"

379 various, varied comp l. 22 The 'bustle of resort' is in *L'Allegro* the 'busy hum of men'

380 all to-ruffled. Milton wrote "all to ruffled" which may be interpreted in various ways (1) all to ruffled, (2) all too ruffled, (3) all to ruffled The first of these is given in the text as it is etymologically correct *to* is an intensive prefix as in 'to-break' = to break in pieces, 'to-tear' = to tear asunder, etc., while *all* (= quite) is simply an adverb modifying *to-ruffled* But about 1500 A.D. this idiom was misunderstood, and the prefix *to* was detached from the verb and either read along with *all* (thus all to = altogether), or confused with *too* (thus all to = too too, decidedly too) It is doubtful in which sense Milton used the phrase, like Shakespeare, he may have disregarded its origin See Morris, § 321, Abbott, §§ 28, 436

381 He that has light, etc Comp *Par Lost*, i 254 'The mind is its own place,' etc

382. centre, i.e. centre of the earth comp *Par Lost* i 686, "Men also Ransacked the centre" and *Hymn Nat* 162, "The aged Earth Shall from the surface to the centre shake" Sometimes the word 'centre' was used of the Earth itself, the fixed centre of the whole universe according to the Ptolemaic system The idea here conveyed, however, is not that of immovability (as in *Par Reg* iv 534, "as a centre firm") but of utter darkness

385 his own dungeon comp *Sams Agon*, 156, "Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!) The *dungeon* of thyself"

386 most affects has the greatest liking for It now generally denotes rather a feigned than a real liking comp *pretend* Lines 386 392 may be compared with *Il Pens* 167-174

393 Hesperian tree An allusion to the tree on which grew the golden apples of Juno, which were guarded by the Hesperides and the sleepless dragon Ladon Hence the reference to the 'dragon watch' comp Tennyson's *Dream of Fair Women*, 255, "Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor Do hunt me, day and night" See also ll 981 983

395 unenchanted, superior to all the powers of enchantment, not to be enchanted Similarly Milton has 'unreproved' for 'not reprovably,' 'unvalued' for 'invaluable,' etc, and Shakespeare has 'unavoided' for 'inevitable,' 'imagined' for 'imaginable,' etc Abbett (§ 375) says The passive participle is often used to signify, not that which *was* and *is*, but that which *was* and therefore *can be hereafter*, in other words *ed* is used for *-able*

396 Compare Chaucer, *Doctor's Tale*, 44, "She flowered in virginity, With all humility and abstinence"

398 unsunned, hidden Comp *Cym* ii 5 13, "As chaste as unsunned snow", *F Q* ii 7, "Mammon Sunning his treasure hear"

400 as bid me hope, etc The construction is, 'as (you may) bid me (to) hope (that) Danger will wink on Opportunity and (that Danger will) let a single helpless maiden pass uninjured'

401 Danger will wink on, etc, i.e. danger will shut its eyes to an opportunity To *wink on* or *wink at* is to connive, to refuse to see something comp *Macbeth*, i 4 52, "The eye *wink* at the hand", *Acts*, xvii 30 Warton notes a similar argument by Rosalind in *As You Like It*, i 3 113 "Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold"

403 surrounding Milton is said to be the first author of any note who uses this word in its current sense of 'encompassing,'

which it has acquired through a supposed connection with *round* Shakespeare does not use it Its original sense is 'to overflow' (Lat *superundare*)

404 it recks me not, i.e. I do not heed an impersonal use of the old verb *reck* (A S *rēcan*, to care) Comp *Lyc* 122, "What *reck*s it them."

405 dog them both, i.e. follow closely upon night and loneliness Comp *All's Well*, III. 4 15, "death and danger *dogs* the heels of worth"

407 unowned, i.e. 'thinking her to be unowned,' or 'as if unowned' Milton thus, as in Latin, frequently condenses a clause into a participle

408 infer, reason, argue This use of the word is obsolete See Shakespeare, III *Hen VI* II. 2 44, "*Inferring* arguments of mighty force", *K John*, III 1 213, "Need must needs *infer* this principle" also *Par Lost*, VII 91, "great or bright *infern*s not excellence."

409 without all doubt, i.e. beyond all doubt a Latinism = *sine omni dubitatione*

411 arbitrate the event, judge of the result The meaning is 'Where the result depends equally upon circumstances to be hoped and to be dreaded I incline to hope'

413 squint suspicion. Compare Quarles "Heart-gnawing Hatred, and squint eyed Suspicion" To look askance or side ways frequently indicates suspicion

419 if Heaven gave it, i.e. even *although* Heaven gave it.

420 'Tis chastity "The passage which begins here and ends at line 475 is a concentrated expression of the moral of the whole Masque, and an exposition also of a cardinal idea of Milton's philosophy" (Masson)

421 clad in complete steel, i.e. completely armed, comp *Hamlet*, I 4 52, where the phrase occurs. The accent is on the first syllable

422 quivered nymph The chaste Diana of the Romans was armed with bow and quiver and Shakespeare makes virginity "Diana's livery" So in Spenser, Belpheobe, the personification of Chastity, has "at her back a bow and quiver gay" 'Quivered' is the Latin *pharetrata*

423 trace, traverse track unharboured, affording no shelter. Radically, a harbour is a lodging or shelter

424 Infamous, having a bad name, ill famed a Latinism The word now implies disgrace or guilt It is here accented on the penult

425 sacred rays comp I 782

426 bandite or mountaineer 'Bandite' (in Shakespeare *bandetto*, and now *bandit*) is borrowed from the Italian *bandito*, outlawed or *banned* 'Mountaineer,' here used in a bad senso In modern English it has reverted to its original sense—a dweller in mountains The dwellers in mountains are often fierce and readily become freebooters hence the changes of meaning See *Temp* iii 3 44, "Who would believe that there were *mountaineers* Dew-lapp'd like bulls", also *Cym* iv 2 120, "Who called me traitor, *mountaineer* "

428 very desolation. Very (as an adj) = true or real and may be traced to Lat *verus* = true comp L 646

429 shagged shades 'Shagged' is rugged or shaggy, and 'horrid' is probably used in the Latin sense of 'rough' see note, l. 38

430 unblenched, undaunted, unflinching This word, sometimes confounded with 'unblanched,' is from *blench*, a causal of *blink*

431 Be it not a conditional clause = on condition that it be not

432 Some say, etc. Compare *Hamlet*, i 1 158

"Some say that, ever against that season comes

Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,

The bird of dawning singeth all night long

And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad "

433 In fog or fire, etc Comp *Il Pens* 93, "those demons that are found In fire, air, flood, or underground" an allusion to the different orders and powers of demons as accepted in the Middle Ages Burton, in his *Anat of Mel*, quotes from a writer who thus enumerates the kinds of sublunary spirits—"fiery, aerial, terrestrial, watery, and subterranean, besides fairies, satyrs, nymphs, etc "

434 meagre hag, lean witch *Hag* is from A S *haegtesse*, a prophetic or witch. Comp *Par Lost*, ii 662, *M W of W* iv 2 188, "Come down, you witch, you *hag* " unlaid ghost, unpacified or wandering spirit It was a superstition that ghosts left the world of spirits and wandered on the earth from the hour of curfew (see *Temp* v 1 40, *King Lear*, iii 4 120, "This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet, he begins at curfew," etc) until "the first cock his matin rings" (*L Alleg* 14) 'Curfew' (Fr *couvre-feu* = fire cover), the bell that was rung at eight or nine o'clock in the evening as a signal that all fires and lights were to be extinguished

436 swart faery of the mine In Burton's *Anat of Mel* we read, "Subterranean devils are as common as the rest, and do as much harm Olaus Magnus makes six kinds of them, some

ligger, some less These are commonly seen about mines of metals," etc. Warton quotes from an old writer "Pioneers or diggers for metal do affirm that in many mines there appear strange shapes and spirits who are appparelled like unto the labourers in the pit " 'Swart' (also *sicartly*, *sicarth*, and *swarthy*) here means black in Scandinavian mythology these subterranean spirits were called the *Swartalfar*, or black elves Comp *Lyc* 138, "the *sicart* star," where 'swart' = swart making

438 Do ye believe Ye is properly a second person plural, but (like *you*) is frequently used as a singular for examples, see Abbott, § 236

439 old schools of Greece The brother now turns for his arguments from the mediæval mythology of Northern Europe to the ancient legends of Greece

440 to testify, to bear witness to comp 1 248, 421

441 Dian. Diana was the huntress among the immortals she was insensible to the bolts of Cupid, i.e. to the power of love She was the protectress of the flocks and game from beasts of prey, and at the same time was believed to send plagues and sudden deaths among men and animals. Comp the song to Cynthia (Diana) in *Cynthia's Revels*, v 1, "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair," etc

442. silver-shafted queen. The epithet is applicable to Diana both as huntress and goddess of the moon as the former she bore arrows which were frequently called *shafts*, and as the latter she bore shafts or rays of light *Shaft* is etymologically 'a shaven rod' In Chaucer, *C T* 1364, 'shaft' = arrow

443 brinded lioness. 'Brindred' = brindled or streaked Comp "brindred cat," *Macb* ii 1 1 *brind* is etymologically connected with *brand*

444 mountain pard, i.e. panther or other spotted wild beast. *Pard* originally a Persian word, is common in the compounds *leo pard* and *camelo pard*

445 frivolous Cupid See the speech of Oberon, *M N D* ii. 1 65 The epithet 'frivolous' applies to Cupid in his lower character as the wanton god of sensual love, not in his character as the fair Eros who unites all the discordant elements of the universe see note, l 1004

447 snaky headed Gorgon shield Medusa was one of the three Gorgons frightful beings, whose heads were covered with hissing serpents, and who had wings, brazen claws, and huge teeth Whoever looked at Medusa was turned into stone, but Perseus, by the aid of enchantment, slew her Minerva (Athene) placed the monster's head in the centre of her shield, which confounded Cupid see *Par Lost*, ii. 610

to become icy or like a solid

449 ~~frozen~~, froze The adjective 'congealed' is used proleptically, the meaning being 'froze into a stone so that it was congealed'

450 But, except a preposition

451 dashed, confounded this meaning of the word is obsolete

452 blank awe the awe of one amazed Comp the phrase, 'blank astonishment,' and see *Par Lost*, ix 890

454 so, i.e. chaste.

455 liveried angels lackey her, i.e. ministering angels attend her So, in *L'Alleg* 62, "the clouds in thousand liveries dight", a servant's livery being the distinctive dress delivered to him by his master 'Lackey,' to wait upon, from 'lackey (or lacquey), a footboy, who runs by the side of his master The word is here used in a good sense, without implying servility (as in *Ant and Cleop* i. 4. 46, "lackeying the varying tide") 'Her' the soul. Milton is fond of the feminine personification see line 396

457 vision a trisyllable

458 no gross ear See notes, l 112 and 997

459 oft converse, frequent communion *Oft* is here used adjectively this use is common in the English Bible, e.g. 1 *Tim* v 23, "thine often infirmities"

460 Begin to cast turns 'Begin' is subjunctive, 'turns' is indicative the latter may be used to convey greater certainty and vividness

461 temple of the mind, i.e. the body This metaphor is common see Shakespeare, *Temp* i 2 57, "There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple", and the Bible, *John*, ii. 21, "He spake of the temple of his body"

462 the soul's essence As if, by a life of purity, the body gradually became spiritualised, and therefore partook of the soul's immortality

465 most, above all.

467 soul grows clotted This doctrine is expounded in Plato's *Phaedo*, in a conversation between Socrates and Cebes

Socrates (speaking of the pure soul) That soul, I say, herself invisible, departs to the invisible world—to the divine and immortal and rational thither arriving, she is secure of bliss, and is released from the error and folly of men, their fears and wild passions and all other human ills, and for ever dwells, as they say of the initiated, in company with the gods Is not this true, Cebes?

Cebes Yes, beyond a doubt

Soc But the soul which has been polluted, and is impure at

the time of her departure, and is the companion and servant of the body always, and is in love with and fascinated by the body and by the desires and pleasures of the body, until she is led to believe that the truth only exists in a bodily form, which a man may touch and see and taste, and use for the purposes of his lusts—the soul, I mean, accustomed to hate and fear and avoid the intellectual principle, which to the bodily eye is dark and invisible and can be attained only by philosophy,—do you suppose that such a soul will depart pure and unalloyed?

Ceb That is impossible

Soc She is held fast by the corporeal, which the continual association and constant care of the body have wrought into her nature

Ceb Very true

Soc. And this corporeal element, my friend, is heavy and weighty and earthy, and is that element by which such a soul is depressed and dragged down again into the visible world, because she is afraid of the invisible and of the world below—prowling about tombs and sepulchres, in the neighbourhood of which, as they tell us, are seen certain ghostly apparitions of souls which have not departed pure, but are cloyed with sight and therefore visible

Ceb That is very likely, Socrates.

Soc. Yes, that is very likely, Cebes, and these must be the souls, not of the good, but of the evil, who are compelled to wander about such places in payment of the penalty of their former evil way of life, and they continue to wander until through the craving after the corporeal which never leaves them, they are imprisoned finally in another body. And they may be supposed to find their prisons in the same natures which they have had in their former lives

Further on in the same dialogue, Socrates says

Each pleasure and pain is a sort of nail which nails and rivets the soul to the body, until she becomes like the body, and believes that to be true which the body affirms to be true, and from agreeing with the body, and having the same delights, she is obliged to have the same habits and haunts, and is not likely ever to be pure at her departure, but is always infected by the body.—*Extracted from Jowett's Translation of the Dialogues*

468 imbodiles and imbrutes, -i.e. becomes materialised and brutish. *Imbody*, ordinarily used as a transitive verb, is here intransitive. *Imbrute* (said to have been coined by Milton) is also intransitive, in *Par Lost*, ix 166, it is transitive. The use of the word may have been suggested by the *Phardo*, where the souls of the wicked are said to "find their prisons in the same natures which they have had in their former lives," those of gluttons and drunkards passing into asses and animals of that sort

469 divine property In his prose works Milton calls the soul 'that divine particle of God's breathing' comp Horace, *Sat* ii. 2 79, "affigit humo divinae particulam aurae", and Plato's *Phaedo*, "The soul resembles the divine, and the body the mortal"

470 gloomy shadows damp see note, l 207

471 charnel-vaults, burial vaults 'Charnel' (O F charnel, Lat. *carnalis*, *caro*, flesh) comp 'carnal,' l 474

473 As loth, etc. The construction is 'As (being) loth to leave the body that it loved, and (as having) linked itself to a degenerate and degraded state' it by syntax this pronoun refers to 'shadows,' or (in thought) 'such shadow' It seems best, however, to connect it with 'soul,' line 467

474. sensuality The modern form of the word is *sensuality*

475 degenerate and degraded the former because 'imbodyed,' the latter because 'imbruted.'

476 divine Philosophy, i.e. such philosophy as is to be found in "the divine volume of Plato" (as Milton has called it)

477 crabbed, sour or bitter. comp crab apple Crab (a shell-fish) and crab (a kind of apple) are radically connected, both conveying the idea of scratching or pinching (Skeat)

478 Apollo's lute Apollo being the god of song and music Comp *Par Reg* i. 478-480, *L L L* iv 3 342, "as sweet and musical As bright *Apollo's lute*, strung with his hair"

479 nectared sweets Nectar (Gk νέκταρ, the drink of the gods) is repeatedly used by Milton to express the greatest sweetness see l. 838, *Par Lost*, iv 333, "Nectarine fruits", v 306, 426

482. Methought see note, l 171 what should it be? This is a direct question about a past event, and means 'What was it likely to be?' "It seems to increase the emphasis of the interrogation, since a doubt about the past (time having been given for investigation) implies more perplexity than a doubt about the future" (Abbott, § 325) For certain, i.e. for certain truth, certainly

483 night-foundered, benighted, lost in the darkness. Radically, 'to founder' is to go to the bottom (Fr *fondrer*, Lat *fundus*, the bottom), hence applied to ships, it is also applied to horses sinking in a slough. The compound is Miltonic (see *Par Lost*, l 204), and is sometimes stigmatised as meaningless, on the contrary, it is very expressive, implying that the brothers are swallowed up in night and have lost their way 'Founder' is here used in the secondary sense of 'to be lost' or 'to be in distress'

484 neighbour An adjective, as in line 576, and frequently in Shakespeare Neighbour = nigh boor, i.e. a peasant dwelling near.

487 Best draw we had best draw our swords

489 Defence is a good cause, etc., i.e. 'in defending ourselves we are engaged in a good cause, and may Heaven be on our side'

490 That hallo We are to understand that the Attendant Spirit has halloed just before entering, this is shown by the stage direction given in the edition of *Comus* printed by Lawes in 1637: *He hallos, the Guardian Dæmon hallos again, and enters in the habit of a shepherd*

491 you fall, etc., i.e. otherwise you will fall on our swords.

493 sure see note, l 246

494 Thyrsis, Like *Lyceias*, this name is common in pastoral poetry. In Milton's *Epytaphium Damonis* it stands for Milton himself. In *Comus* it belongs to Lawes, who now receives additional praise for his musical genius. In lines 86-88 the compliment is enforced by alliterative verses, and here by the aid of rhyme (495-512). Masson thinks that the poet, having spoken of the madrigals of Thyrsis, may have introduced this rhymed passage in order to prolong the feeling of Pastoralism by calling up the cadence of known English pastoral poems.

495 huddling This conveys the two ideas of hastening and crowding comp Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 19, "*Et properantis aequo per amoenos ambitus agros*" madrigal a pastoral or shepherd's song (Ital. *mandra*, a flock) such compositions, then in favour, had been made by Lawes and by Milton's father.

496 sweetened dale, poetical exaggeration or hyperbole, implying that fragrant flowers became even more fragrant from Thyrsis' music.

497 swain a word of common use in pastoral poetry. It denotes strictly a peasant or, more correctly, a young man comp the compounds *boat swain*, *cox swain*. See *Arc* 26, "Stay, gentle swains," etc.

499 pent panned participle of *pen*, to shut up (A.S. *þennan*, which is connected with *þin*, seen in *þin fold*, l 7) forsook a form of the past tense used for the participle.

501 and his next joy, i.e. 'and (thou), his next joy'—words addressed to the second brother.

502 trivial toy, ordinary trifle. The phrase seems redundant, but 'trivial' may here be used in the strict sense of common or well known. Compare *Il Pens* 4, "fill the fixed mind with all your toys" and Burton's *Anat. of Mel*, "complain of toys, and fear without a cause."

503 stealth of, things stolen by

506 To this my errand, etc., i.e. in comparison with this errand of mine and the anxiety it involved "To" = in comparison with, an idiom common in Elizabethan English, e.g. "There is no woe to this correction," *Two Gent* II 4. 138 See Abbott, § 187

508 How chance *Chance* is here a verb followed by a substantive clause 'how does it chance that,' etc. This idiom is common in Shakespeare (Abbott, § 37), where it sometimes has the force of an adverb (= perchance) compare *Par Lost*, II. 492 "If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet," etc

509 sadly, -seriously - Radically, sad = sated or full (A.S. *sæd*), hence the two meanings, 'serious' and 'sorrowful,' the former being common in Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare Comp. 'some *sad* person of known judgment' (Bacon), *Romeo and Jul.* I. 1 205, "Tell me in *sadness*, who is that you love", *Par Lost*, VI. 541, "settled in his face I see *Sad* resolution." See also Swinburne's *Miscellanies* (1886), page 170

510 our neglect, i.e. neglect on our part

511 Ay me! Comp *Lyc* 56, "Ay me! I fondly dream", 154 This exclamatory phrase = ah me! Its form is due to the French *ayme* = alas, for me! and has no connection with *ay* or *aye* = yes In this line *true* rhymes with *shew* comp *youth* and *shew'th*, *Sonnet on his having arrived at the age of twenty three*.

512. Prithee A familiar fusion of *I pray thee*, sometimes written 'pr'ythee.' Lines 495 512 form nine rhymed couplets

513 ye a dative See note on I. 216

514. shallow Comp *Son.* I. 6, "shallow cuckoo's bill," *XIII* 12, *Arc.* 41, "shallow searching Fame"

515 sage poets *Homar* and *Virgil* are meant, both of these mention the chimera Milton (*Par Lost*, III. 19) afterwards speaks of himself as "taught by the heavenly Muse." Comp. *L'Alleg* 17, *Il Pens* 117, "great bards besides In sage and solemn tunes have sung"

516 storied, related 'To story' is here used actively the past participle is frequent in the sense of 'bearing a story or picture', *Il Pens* 159, "storied windows", Gray's *Elegy*, 41, "storied urn", Tennyson's "storied walls" *Story* is an abbreviation of *history*

517 Chimeras, monsters. Comp the sublime passage in *Par Lost*, II. 618 628 'The Chimera was a fire breathing monster, with the head of a lion, the tail of a dragon, and the body of a goat It was slain by Bellerophon.' As a common name 'chimera' is used by Milton to denote a terrible monster, and is now current (in an age which rejects such fabulous creatures) in the sense of a wild

fancy, hence the adj. *chimerical* = wild or fanciful. enchanted isles, e.g. those of Circe and Calypso, mentioned in the *Odyssey*

518 rifted rocks. rifted = riven. Orpheus, in search of Eurydice, entered the lower world through the rocky jaws of Taenarus, a cape in the south of Greece (see Virgil *Georg.* iv 467, *Taenarias fauces*), here also Hercules emerged from Hell with the captive Cerberus

519 such there be. See note on l. 12 for this indicative use of *be*

520 navel, centre, inmost recess. Shakespeare (*Cor.* iii 1 123) speaks of the 'navel of the state', and in Greek Calypso's island was 'the navel of the sea,' while Apollo's temple at Delphi was 'the navel of the earth'

521 Immured, enclosed. Here used generally. radically it = shut up within walls (Lat. *murus*, a wall)

523 witcheries, enchantments

526 murmura. The incantations or spells of evil powers were sung or murmured over the doomed object, sometimes they were muttered (as here) over the enchanted food or drink prepared for the victim. Comp l 817 and *Arc.* 60, "With puissant words and murmurs made to bless."

529 un moulding reason's mintage characterized, i.e. defacing those signs of a rational soul that are stamped on the human face. The figure is taken from the process of melting down coins in order to restamp them. 'Charactered' here used in its primary sense (Gk. *χαρακτήρ*, an engraven or stamped mark), as in the phrase 'printed characters'. The word is here accented on the second syllable, in modern English on the first

531 crofts that brow = crofts that overhang. Croft = a small field, generally adjoining a house. Brow = overhang. comp *L'Alleg.* 8, "low browed rocks"

532. bottom glade. the glade below. The word *bottom*, however, is frequent in Shakespeare in the sense of 'valley', hence 'bottom glade' might be interpreted 'glade in the valley'

533 monstrous rout, see note on the stage direction after l 92. Comp 'the bottom of the monstrous world,' *Iyc.* 158. In *Ien.* vii 15, we read that when Aeneas sailed past Circe's island he heard "the growling noise of lions in wrath, and shapes of huge wolves fiercely howling"

534 stabled wolves. wolves in their dens. *Stable* (= a standing place) is used by Milton in the general sense of abode, e.g. in *Par. Lost*, xi 752, "sea monsters whelped and stabled". Comp "Stable for camels," *Ezek.* xxi 5, and the Latin *stabulum*, *Aen.* vi 179, *stabula alta ferarum*

535 Hecate. see l. 135

536 bowers see note, l. 45

539 unweeting, unwitting, unknowing This spelling is found in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, both in the compounds and in the simple verb *weet*, a corruption of *wit* (A S *witan*, to know). Compare *Par Req* i 126, "unweeting, he fulfilled The purposed counsel" *Sam's Agon* 1680, Chaucer, *Doctor's Tale*, "Virginius came to weet the judge's will"

540 by then, i.e. by the time when The demonstrative adverb thus implies a relative adverb comp the Greek, where the demonstrative is generally omitted, though in Homer occasionally the demonstrative alone is used Another rendering is to make line 540 parenthetical

542 knot-grass A grass with knotted or jointed stem some, however, suppose *marjoram* to be intended here. dew-besprent, i.e. besprinkled with dew comp *Lyc* 29 *Be* is an intensive prefix, *sprent* is connected with M E. *sprengen*, to scatter, of which *sprinkle* is the frequentative form.

543 sat me down see note, l. 61

544 canopied, and interwove Comp *M N D* ii 2. 49, 'I know a bank,' etc In sense 'canopied' refers to 'bank,' and 'interwove' to 'ivy' There are two forms of the past participle of *weave*, viz. *wove* and *woven* see *Arc* 47

545 flaunting, showy, garish, In *Lyc* 146, the poet first wrote 'garish columbine,' then 'well attired woodbine'

547 meditate minstrelsy, i.e. to sing a pastoral-song comp *Lyc* 32 66 *To meditate the muse* is a Virgilian phrase see *Ecl* i. and vi The Lat *meditor* has the meaning of 'to apply one's self to,' and does not mean merely to ponder

548 had, should have comp l. 394 ere a close, i.e. before he had finished his song (Masson) *Close* occurs in the technical sense of 'the final cadence of a piece of music'

549 wanted see note, l. 332

550 barbarous comp *Son* xii 3, "a barbarous noise environs me Of owls and cuckoos, etc"

551 listened them The omission of *to* after verbs of hearing is frequent in Shakespeare and others comp "To listen our purpose", "List a brief tale", "hearken the end", etc (see Abbott, § 199) 'Them' this refers to the *sounds* implied in 'dissonance'

552 unusual stop This refers to what happened at l. 145, and the "soft and solemn breathing sound" to l. 230

553 drowsy frightened, i.e. drowsy and frightened The noise of Comus's rout is here supposed to have kept the horses of night awake and in a state of drowsy agitation until the sudden calm

put an end to their uneasiness. In Milton's corrected ms. we read 'drowsy flighted,' where the two words are not co-ordinate epithets but must be regarded as expressing one idea = flying drowsily, to express this some insert a hyphen. Comp 'dewy-feathered,' *Il Per.* 146 and others of Milton's remarkable compound adjectives. The reading in the text is that of the printed editions of 1637, '45, and '73

554 Sleep (or Night) is represented as drawn by horses in a chariot with its curtains closely drawn. Comp *Macbeth*, II. I. 51, "curtained sleep"

555 'The lady's song rose into the air so sweetly and imperceptibly that silence was taken unawares and so charmed that she would gladly have renounced her nature and existence for ever if her place could always be filled by such music.' Comp *Par. Lost*, IV. 604, "She all night long her amorous descant sung, Silence was pleased", also Jonson's *Vision of Delight*

"Yet let it like an odour rise
To all the senses here,
And fall like sleep upon their eyes,
Or music in their ear"

558 took, taken. Comp. I. 256 for a similar use of *take*, and compare 'forsook,' line 499, for the form of the word.

560 Still, always. This use of *still* is frequent in Elizabethan writers (Abbott, § 69) I was all ear Warton notes this expressive idiom (still current) in Drummond's 'Sonnet to the Nightingale,' and in *Tempest*, IV. I. 59, "all eyes" *All* is an attribute of *I*

561 create a soul, etc., i.e. breathe life even into the dead comp *L'Alleg* 144 Warton supposes that Milton may have seen a picture in an old edition of Quarles' *Emblems*, in which "a soul in the figure of an infant is represented within the ribs of a skeleton, as in its prison" *Rom* VII. 24, "Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"

565 harrowed, distracted, torn as by a harrow This is probably the meaning, but there is a verb 'harrow' corrupted from 'harry,' to subdue, hence some read "harried with grief and fear"

567. How sweet how near This sentence contains two exclamations this is a Greek construction. In English the idiom is "How sweet and how near," etc. We may, however, render the line thus "How sweet, how near the deadly snare is!"

568 lawns 'Lawn' is always used by Milton to denote an open stretch of grassy ground whereas in modern usage it is applied generally to a smooth piece of grass grown land in front of

a house. The origin of the word is disputed, but it seems radically to denote 'a clear space', it is said to be cognate with *llan* used as a prefix in the names of certain Welsh towns, e.g. *Llan daff*, *Llangollen*. In Chaucer it takes the form *launde*

569 often trod by day, which I have often trod by day, and therefore know well

570 mine ear see note, l 171

571 *wizard* Here used in contempt, like many other words with the suffix *-ard*, or *-art*, as *braggart*, *sluggard*, etc Milton occasionally, however, uses the word merely in the sense of magician or magical, without implying contempt see *Lyc* 55, "Deva spreads her *wizard* stream."

572 certain signs see l 644

574 *aidless* an obsolete word. See Trench's *English Past and Present* for a list of about 150 words in *less*, all now obsolete comp l. 92, note *wished* *wished for* Comp l 950 for a similar transitive use of the verb

575 such two two persons of such and such description

577 *durst* not stay *Durst* is the old past tense of *dare*, and is used as an auxiliary the form *dared* is much more modern, and may be used as an independent verb

578 *sprung* see note, l. 256

579 till I had found The language is extremely condensed here, the meaning being, 'I began my flight, and continued to run till I *had found* you', the pluperfect tense is used because the speaker is looking back upon his meeting with the brothers after completing a long narration of the circumstances that led up to it If, however, 'had found' be regarded as a subjunctive, the meaning is, 'I began my flight, and determined to continue it until I had found (i.e. should have found) you' Comp Abbott § 361

581 triple knot, a three fold alliance of Night, Shades, and Hell.

584. "This confidence of the elder brother in favour of the final efficacy of virtue, holds forth a very high strain of philosophy, delivered in as high strains of eloquence and poetry" (Warton) And Todd adds "Religion here gave energy to the poet's strains"

585 safely, confidently period, sentence

586 for me, i.e. for my part, so far as I am concerned see note, l. 602

588 Which erring men call Chance 'Erring' belongs to the predicate, "which men erroneously call Chance" Comp Pope, *Essay on Man*

"All nature is but art, unknown to thee,
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see."

588 **this** I hold firm. 'This' is explained by the next line—
"this belief, namely, that Virtue may be assailed, etc., I hold
firmly "

590 enthralled, enslaved Comp L 1022

591 **which** harm, which the Evil Power intended to be most
harmful

595 7 **Gathered like scum**, etc. According to one editor, this
image is "taken from the conjectures of astronomers concerning
the dark spots which from time to time appear on the surface of
the sun's body and after a while disappear again, which they
suppose to be the scum of that fiery matter which first breeds it,
and then breaks through and consumes it "

598 **pillared firmament** The firmament (Lat *firmus*, firm or
solid) is here regarded as the roof of the earth and supported on
pillars The ancients believed the stars to be fixed in the solid
firmament comp *Par Reg* iv 55, also *Wint Tale*, ii 1 100,
"If I mistake In those foundations which I build upon, The
centre is not big enough to bear A schoolboy's top "

602 **for**, as regards **let** **girt**, though he be surrounded

603 **grisly legions** 'Grisly,' radically the same as *grue some* =
horrible, causing terror In *Par Lost*, iv 821, Satan is called
"the grisly king" 'Legions' is here a trisyllable

604 **sooty flag of Acheron**. Acheron, at first the name of a
river of the lower world, came to be used as a name for the
whole of the lower world generally Todd quotes from P
Fletcher's *Locusts* (1627) "All hell run out and sooty flags dis-
play "

605 **Harples and Hydras** The Harpies (lit 'spoilers') were
unclean monsters, being birds with the heads of maidens, with
long claws and gaunt faces *Hydras*, here used as a general
name for monstrous water serpents (Gk *hydōr*, water), the
name was first given to the nine headed monster slain by Hercules
See *Son* xv 7, "new rebellions raise Their *Hydra* heads", the
epithet 'hydra headed' being applied to a rebellion, an epidemic,
or other evil that seems to gain strength from every endeavour
to repress it

607 **return his purchase back**, i.e. 'give up his spoil,' or (as in
the MS) 'release his new got prey' To purchase (Fr *pour-
chasser*) originally meant to pursue eagerly hence to acquire by
fair means or foul it thus came to mean 'to steal' (as frequently
in Spenser, Jonson, and Shakespeare), and 'to buy' (its current
sense) See Trench, *Study of Words*, *Hen V* iii 2 45, "They

will steal anything, and call it *purchase*', 1 *Hen IV* ii 1 101, "thou shalt have share in our *purchase*"

609 venturous, ready to venture See note, l 70

610 yet, nevertheless The meaning is 'Though thy courage is useless, yet I love it' *emprise* an obsolete form (common in Spenser) of *enterprise* It is literally that which is undertaken, hence 'readiness to undertake', hence 'daring'

611 can do thee little stead, i.e. can help thee little *Stead*, both as noun and verb, is obsolete except in certain phrases, e.g. 'to stand in good *stead*,' and in composition, e.g. *steadfast*, *homestead*, *instead*, *Hampstead*, etc. Its strict sense is place or position - comp *Il Pens* 3, "How little you *bested*"

612 Far other arms, i.e. very different arms 'Other' has here its radical sense of 'different,' and can therefore be modified by an adverb

615 unthread, loosen Comp *Temp* iv 1 259, "Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews With aged cramps"

617 As to make this relation, i.e. as to be able to tell this

619 a certain shepherd lad This is supposed to refer to Charles Diodati, Milton's dearest friend, to whom he addressed his 1st and 6th elegies, and after whose death he wrote the touching poem *Epitaphium Damonis*, in which he alludes to his friend's medical and botanical skill

"There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
Thy friend the name and healing powers of each"

(Cowper's translation)

620 Of small regard to see to in colloquial English, 'not much to look at.' This is an old idiom - comp Greek καλὸς ὄρω see English Bible, "goodly to look to," 1 *Sam* xvi 12, *Ezek* xxiii 15, *Jer* xlvii 3

621, virtuous, of healing power see note, l 165 Comp *Il Pens* 113, "the virtuous ring and glass"

623 beg me sing see note l 304

625 ecstasy see note, l 261 The Greek *ekstasis* = standing out of one's self

626 scrip, wallet

627 simples, medicinal herbs 'Simple (Lat *simplicem* 'one fold,' 'not compound') was used of a single ingredient in a medicine, hence its popular use in the sense of 'herb' or 'drug'

630 me, i.e. for me the ethic dative

633 bore The nom. of this verb is, in sense, some such word as the plant or the root.

634 unknown and like esteemed known and esteemed to a like extent, i.e. in both cases not at all. *Lale* here corresponds to the prefix *un* in *unknown*. On the description of the plant, see Introduction reference to Ascham's *Schoolmaster*.

635 clouted shoon, patched shoes. The expression is found in Shakespeare, in *Hen. 1* iv 2 195, "Spare none but such as go in clou'd shoon", *Cym.* iv 2 214, "put My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness Answer'd my steps too loud" see examples in Mayhew and Skeat's *M. E. Dictionary*. There are instances, however, of *clout* in the sense of a plate of iron fastened on the sole of a shoe. In either sense of the word 'clouted shoon' would be heavy and coarse. *Shoon* is an old plural (O. E. *scon*), comp. *hosen*, *eyen* (= eyes), *dohhtren* (= daughters), *foen* (= foes), etc.

636 more med'cinal, of greater virtue. The line may be scanned thus: And yet | more med | 'cinal is | it than | that Mo | ly. *Moly*. When Ulysses was approaching the abode of Circe he was met by Hermes, who said "Come then, I will redeem thee from thy distress, and bring deliverance. Lo, take this herb of virtue, and go to the dwelling of Circe, that it may keep from thy head the evil day. And I will tell thee all the magic sleight of Circe. She will mix thee a potion and cast drugs into the mess, but not even so shall she be able to enchant thee, so helpful is this charmed herb that I shall give thee. Therewith the slayer of Argos gave me the plant that he had plucked from the ground, and he showed me the growth thereof. It was black at the root, but the flower was like to milk. *Moly* the gods call it, but it is hard for mortal men to dig, howbeit with the gods all things are possible" (*Odyssey*, x 280, etc., *Butcher and Lang's translation*). In his first Elegy Milton alludes to *Moly* as the counter charm to the spells of Circe: see also Tennyson's *Lotos Eaters*, "beds of amaranth and *moly*".

638 He called it Haemony. He is the shepherd lad of line 619. *Haemony*. Milton invents the plant, both name and thing. But the adjective *Haemonian* is used in Latin poetry as = *Thessalian*, *Haemonia* being the old name of Thessaly. And as Thessaly was regarded as a land of magic, 'Haemonian' acquired the sense of 'magical' (see Ovid, *Met.* vii 264, "*Haemonia radices valle resetas*," etc.), and Milton's *Haemony* is simply "the magical plant". Coleridge supposes that by the prickles and gold flower of the plant Milton signified the sorrows and triumph of the Christian life.

639 sovran use. see note, l. 41. The use of this adjective with charms, medicines, or remedies of any kind was so very common that the word came to imply 'all healing,' 'supremely efficacious', see Cor. ii 1 125, "The most sovereign prescription in Galen."

640 mildew blast comp *Arc.* 48 53, *Ham* iii 4 64, "Here is your husband, Like a *mildew'd* ear *Blasting* his wholesome brother" A mildew blast is one giving rise to that kind of blight called mildew (A.S. meledew, honey dew), it being supposed that the prevalence of dry east winds was favourable to its formation.

642. pursed it up, etc., i.e. put it in my wallet, though I did not attach much importance to it little reckoning comp *Lyc* 116, where the very same phrase occurs

643 Till now that Here *that* = when, the clause introduced by it being explanatory of *now* (see Abbott, § 284)

646 7 Entered came off 'I entered into the very midst of his treacherous enchantments, and yet escaped' *Lime twigs* = snares, in allusion to the practice of catching birds by means of twigs smeared with a viscous substance (called on that account 'birdlime') Shakespeare makes repeated allusion to this practice see *Macbeth*, iv 2 34, *Two Gent* ii 2 68, ii. *Hen.* VI 1. 3 91, etc.

649 necromancer's hall Warton supposes that Milton here thought of a magician's castle which has an enchanted hall invaded by Christian knights, as we read of in the romances of chivalry *Necromancer*, lit one who by magical power can commune with the dead (Gk νεκρός, a corpse), hence a sorcerer. From confusion of the first syllable with that of the Lat *niger*, black, the art of necromancy came to be called "the black art"

650 Where if he be, Lat *ubi si sit* in English the relative adverb in such cases is best rendered by a conjunction + a demonstrative adverb, thus, 'and if he be there'

651 brandished blade Comp Hermes' advice to Ulysses "When it shall be that Circe smites thee with her long wand, even then draw thy sharp sword from thy thigh, and spring on her, as one eager to slay her," *Odyssey*, x break his glass An imitation of Spenser, who makes Sir Guyon break the golden cup of the enchantress Excess, *F Q* i. 12, stanza 56

652 luscious, delicious The word is a corruption of *lustious* from O E *lust* = pleasure see note, l 49

653 But seize his wand The force of this injunction is shown by lines 815 819

654 menace high, violent threat *High* is thus used in a number of figurative senses, e.g. a high wind, a high hand, high passions (*Par Lost*, ix. 123), high descent, high design, etc

655 Sons of Vulcan. In the *Aeneid* (Bk viii 252) we are told that Cacus, son of Vulcan (the Roman God of Fire), "vomited from his throat huge volumes of smoke" when pursued by Hercules, "*Faucibus ingentem fumum,*" etc

657 apace quickly, at a great pace. This word has changed its meaning in Chaucer it means 'at a foot pace,' i.e. slowly. The first syllable is the indefinite article 'a' = one (Skeat)

658 bear the subjunctive used optatively (Abbott, § 365) (*Stage Direction*) puts by puts on one side, refuses. goes about to rise, i.e. endeavours to rise. This idiomatic use of *go about* still lingers in the phrase 'to go about one's business', comp 'to set about' anything

659 but, merely comp l. 656 After the conditional clause we have here a verb in the present tense ('are chained'), a construction which well expresses the certainty and immediate action of the sorcerer's spell (see Abbott, § 371)

660 your nerves alabaster Comp *Tempest*, l. 2 471-484 Milton has the word alabaster three times, twice incorrectly spelled *alablaster* (in this passage and *Par Lost*, l. 544) and once correctly, as now entered in the text (*Par Reg* l. 548) *Alabaster* is a kind of marble comp *On Shal.* 14, "make us marble with too much conceiving"

661 or, as Daphne was, etc The construction is 'If I merely wave this wand, you (become) a marble statue, or (you become) root-bound, as Daphne was, that fled Apollo' Milton inserts the adverbial clause in the predicate, which is not unusual, he then adds an attributive clause, which is not usual in English, though common in Greek and Latin. Daphne, an Arcadian goddess, was pursued by Apollo, and having prayed for aid, she was changed into a laurel tree (Gk. δάφνη) comp the story of Syrinx and Pan, referred to in *Arc* 106

662 fled. Comp the transitive use of the verb in l. 829, 939, *Son xviii* 14, "fly the Babylonian woe", *Sams Agon* 1541, "fly The sight of this so horrid spectacle"

663 freedom of my mind, etc Comp Cowper's noble passage, "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free," etc (*Task*, v 733)

665 corporal rind the body, called in *Il Pens* 92, "this fleshly nook"

668 here be all See note, l. 12

669 fancy can beget comp *Il Pens* 6

672 cordial julep, heart reviving drink *Cordial*, lit hearty (Lat *cordi*, stem of *cor*, the heart) *julep*, Persian *gulāb*, rose water

673 his = its see note, l. 96

674 syrups Arab *sharīb*, a drink, wine

675 that Nopenthes, etc The allusion is explained by the following lines of the *Odyssey* "Then Helen, daughter of

Zeus, turned to new thoughts Presently she cast a drug into the wine whereof they drank, a drug to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow Whoso should drink a draught thereof, when it is mingled in the bowl, on that day he would let no tear fall down his cheeks, not though his father and his mother died Medicines of such virtue and so helpful had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, had given her, a woman of Egypt, where earth the grain giver yields herbs in greatest plenty, many that are healing in the cup, and many baneful" (*Butcher and Lang's translation*, iv 219 230) 'Nepenthes,' a Greek adj = sorrow-dispelling (*νη*, privative, *πένθος*, grief) It is here used by Milton as the name of an opiate and it is now occasionally used as a general name for drugs that relieve pain.

677 Is of such power, etc see note, l 155 The construction is, 'That Nepenthes is not of such power to stir up joy as this (julep is, nor is it) so friendly to life (nor) so cool to thirst'

679 Why to yourself Comp Shakespeare, *Son.* i. 8, "Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel"

680 'Nature gave you your beautiful person to be held in trust on certain conditions, of which the most obligatory is that the body should have refreshment after toil, ease after pain Yet this very condition you disregard, and deal harshly with yourself by refusing my proffered glass at a time when you are in need of food and rest.' Comp Shakespeare, *Son* iv "Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy," etc.

685 unexempt condition, i e. a condition binding on all and at all times, a law of human nature

687 mortal frailty, i e weak mortals abstract for concrete

688 That The antecedent of this relative is *you*, l. 682 See note, l. 2

689 timely, seasonable So 'timeless' = unseasonable (Scott's *Marmion*, iii 223, "gambol rude and *timeless* joke") comp *Son* ii. 8, "*timely* happy spirits", and l 970

693 Was this abode? The verb is singular, because 'cottage' and 'safe abode' convey one idea see Comus's words, l. 320 Notice also that the past tense is used as referring to the past act of telling

694 aspects accent on final syllable.

695 oughly-headed so spelt in Milton's MS = ugly headed *Ugly* is radically connected with *awe*.

698 with visored falsehood and base forgery A vizor (also spelt *visor*, *visard*, *vizard*) is a mask, "a false face" The allusion

is to Comus's disguise see l. 166 *With* in this line, as in lines 672 and 700, denotes *by means of*

700 *liquorish* baits see note on *baited*, l. 162 'Liquorish,' by catachresis for *lickerish* = tempting to the appetite, causing one to *lick* one's lips The student should carefully distinguish the three words *lickerish* (as above), *liquorish* (which is really meaningless) and *liquorice* (=licorice=Lat *glycyrrhiza*), a plant with a sweet root

702. *treasonous*, an obsolete word The current form 'treasonable' has usually a more restricted sense Milton and Shakespeare use *treasonous* in the more general sense of *traitorous* (a cognate word) In this line 'offer' = the thing offered

703 *good men* *good things* This noble sentiment Milton has borrowed from Euripides, *Medea*, 618, *Kakoī γὰρ αἰδρός δῶρ' ἐργῶν οὐκ ἔχει*, "the gifts of the bad man are without profit" (Newton)

704 *that which is not good*, etc This is Platonic the soul has a rational principle and an irrational or appetitive, and when the former controls the latter, the desires are for what is good only (*Rep* iv 439)

707 *budge* doctors of the Stoic *fur* *Budge* is lambskin with the wool dressed outwards, worn on the edge of the hoods of bachelors of arts, etc Therefore, if both *budge* and *fur* be taken, literally the line is tautological But 'budge' has the secondary sense of 'solemn,' like a doctor in his robes, and 'fur' may be used figuratively in the sense of *seal*, just as "the cloth" is used to denote the clergy The whole phrase would thus be equivalent to 'solemn doctors of the Stoic sect.' It is possible that Milton makes equivocal reference to the two senses of 'budge'

708 the Cynic tub = the tub of Diogenes the Cynic, here put in contempt for the Cynic school of Greek philosophy, which was the forerunner of the Stoic system Diogenes, one of the early Cynics, lived in a tub, and was fond of calling himself *ο κυνῶν* (the dog)

709 *the* here used generically

711 *unwithdrawing* In this participle the termination *-ing* seems almost equivalent to that of the past participle comp "all-obeying breath" (=obeyed by all), *A* and *C* in 13, 77 Nature's gifts are not only full but continuous.

714 *all to please* *curious taste* *All* = entirely, here modifies the infinitives *please* and *sate*. *Curious* = fastidious its original sense is 'careful' or 'anxious' Compare the two senses of *exquisite*, note l. 359

715 *set*, i. e. *she set* The pronominal subject is omitted.

717 *To deck* infinitive of purpose.

718. in her own loins, *i.e.* in the bowels of the earth

719 hatched = stored up, enclosed. *Hutch* is an old word for chest or coffer, chiefly used now in the compound 'rabbit-hutch'

720 To store her children with, *i.e.* *wherewith* to store her children. Or we may read, 'in order to store her children with (them)' 'Store' = provide

721 pet of temperance, *i.e.* a sudden and transitory fit of temperance. pulse. So Daniel and his three companions refused the dainties of the King of Babylon and fed on pulse and water, *Dan* 1.

722. frieze, coarse woollen cloth

723 All giver. Comp Gk *παρδώρα*, an epithet applied to the earth as the giver of all

725 'And we should serve him as (if he were) a grudging master and a penurious niggard of his wealth, and (we should) live like Nature's bastards' see *Hebrews* xii 8, "If ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons"

728 Who The pronoun here relates not to the word immediately preceding it, but to the substantive implied in the possessive pronoun *her*, *i.e.* the sons of her who *His*, *her*, etc., in such constructions have their full force as genitives comp *L'Alleg* 124, "her grace whom" = the grace of her whom *sur-charged* overloaded, 'overfraught' (l 732) waste fertility, wasted or unused abundance This participial use of 'waste' seems to be due to the similarity in sound to such participles as 'elevato' (= elevated), 'instruct' (= instructed), etc., which occur in Milton (comp *English Past and Present*, vi.)

729 strangled, suffocated

730 winged air darked with plumes, *i.e.* the air being darkened by the flight of innumerable birds Spenser also has *dark* as a verb Both clauses in this line are absolute

731 over-multitude, outnumber This line and the preceding one illustrate the freedom with which, in earlier English, one part of speech was used for another

732 o'erfraught see note, l. 355

733 emblaze, make to blaze, make splendid There is perhaps a reference to the sense of *emblazon*, which is from M E *blazen*, to blaze abroad, to proclaim.

734 bestud with stars In Milton's *ms* it is 'bestud the centre with their star light,' *centre* being the 'centre of the earth'

735 inured, accustomed, by custom rendered less sensitive

Inure is from the old phrase 'in ure' = in operation (Fr *œuvre*, work)

737 coy shy or reserved cozened cheated, beguiled The origin of this word is interesting a cozeners is one who, for selfish ends, claims kindred or *cousinship* with another, and hence a flatterer or cheat

739 755 Beauty is Nature's coin, etc "The idea that runs through these seventeen lines is a favourite one with the old poets, and Warton and Todd cite parallel passages from Shakespeare, Daniel, Fletcher, and Drayton. Thus, from Shakespeare (*M N D* 1. 1 76 8)

"Earthlier happy is the rose distilled
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness."

See also Shakespeare's first six sonnets, which are pervaded by the idea in all its subtleties" (Masson)

743 let slip time, i.e. allow time to slip see note, l. 304
Comp *Par Lost*, 1. 178 "Let us not slip the occasion"

744 It = beauty languished, languid or languishing comp *Par Lost*, vi 496, "their languished hope revived", *Epitaph on W of W* 33 The suffix *ed* is frequent in Elizabethan English where we now have *ing* (Abbott, § 374)

747 most, as many as possible.

748 homely home There is here a play upon words as in *Two Gent* 1. 1. 2 "Home keeping youth have ever homely wits" *Homely* is derived from *home*.

749 Women with coarse complexions and dull cheeks are good enough for household occupations.

750 of sorry grain, not brilliant, of poor colour 'Grain' is from Lat *granum*, a seed, applied to small objects, and hence to the coeus or cochineal insect which yields a variety of red dyes Hence *grain* came to denote certain colours, e.g. Tyrian purple, violet, etc., and is so used by Milton see *Il Pens* 33, "a robe of darkest grain", *Par Lost*, v 285, "sky-tintured grain", vi 242 "A military vest of purple Livelier than the grain Of Sarras," etc And as these were fast or durable colours we have such phrases as 'to dye in grain,' 'a rogue in grain,' 'an ingrained habit' (See further in Marsh's *Lect on Eng Lang* p 65)

751 sampler, a sample or pattern piece of needlework It is a doublet of *exemplar* tease the housewife's wool To tease is to comb or card comp the Lat *texare*, 'Huswife' = housewife further corrupted into *hussy* *Hussy* (a case for needles, etc.) is a different word.

752. What need a vermill tinctured lip? See note, l 362, on 'what need' *Vermil* a French spelling of *vermilion*. The name is from Lat *vermis*, a worm (the cochineal insect, from which the colour used to be got), and as *vermis* is cognate with Sansk *kṛmī*, a worm, it follows that *vermilion*, *crimson*, and *carmine* are cognate

753 tresses. Homer (*Odyssey*, v 390) speaks of "the fair tressed Dawn," *εὐχάριτος Ἥως*

755 advised. Contrast with 'Advice,' l. 108

756 Lines 756-761 are not addressed to Comus

757 but that were it not that

758 as mine eyes as he has already charmed mine eyes, see note, l 170

759 rules pranked in reason's garb, i.e. specious arguments *Pranked* = decked in a showy manner Milton (*Prose works*, i 147, ed 1698) speaks of the Episcopal church service *pranking* herself in the weeds of the Popish mass Comp *Wint Tale*, iv 4 10, "Most goddess like *prank'd* up", *Par Lost*, ii 226, "Behold, with words clothed in *reason's garb*"

760 1 I hate when Vice brings forward refined arguments, and Virtue allows them to pass unchallenged *bolt* = to sift or separate, as the *boulting mill* separates the meal from the bran, in this sense the word (also spelt *boult*) is used by Chaucer, Spenser (*F Q* ii 4 21), Shakespeare (*Cor* iii 1 322, *Wint Tale*, iv 4 375, "the fanned snow that's *bolted* By the northern blasts twice o'er," etc.) The spelling *bolt* has confused the word with 'bolt,' to shoot or start out See Index to *Globe Shakespeare*

763 she would her children, etc., i.e. she wished (that) her children should be wantonly luxurious comp l 172, *Par Lost*, i. 497-503

764 cateress, stewardess, provider lit. 'a buyer' *Cateress* is feminine the masculine is *caterer*, where the final -er of the agent is unnecessarily repeated

765 Means to the good intends for the good

767 dictate The accent in Milton's time was on the first syllable, both in noun and verb spare Temperance For Milton's praises of Temperance comp *Il Pens* 46, "Spare Fast that oft with gods doth diet", also the 6th Elegy, 56-66, *Son* ix, etc. "There is much in the Lady which resembles the youthful Milton himself—he, the Lady of his college—and we may well believe that the great debate concerning temperance was not altogether dramatic (where, indeed, is Milton truly dramatic?), but was in part a record of passages in the poet's own spiritual history" Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies*

768 If Nature's blessings were equally distributed instead of being heaped upon a luxurious few, then (as Shakespeare says, *King Lear*, iv. 1. 73) "distribution should undo excess, And each man have enough"

769 beseeching, suitable. The original sense of *seem* is 'to be fitting,' as in the words *beseech* and *seemly*

770 lewdly-pampered, one of Milton's most expressive compounds = wickedly gluttonous. *Leied* has passed through several changes of meaning (1) the lay people as distinct from the clergy, (2) ignorant or unlearned, and finally (2) base or licentious.

774 she no whit encumbered, i. e. Nature would not be in the least surcharged (as Comus represented in l. 728) *No whit*, used adverbially = not in the least, lit. 'not a particle.' Etymologically *aught* = a whit, *naught* = no whit

776 His praise due paid, i. e. would be duly paid. On *due*, see note, l. 12. gluttony abstract for concrete.

779 Crams, i. e. crams himself. There are many verbs in English that may be thus used reflexively without having the pronoun expressed, e. g. *feed*, *prepare*, *change*, *pour*, *press*, etc.

780 enow 'Enow' conveys the notion of a number, as in early English it is also spelt *anow*, and in Chaucer *ynoice*, and is the plural of *enough*. It still occurs as a provincialism in England. On lines 780-799 Masson says "A recurrence, by the sister, with much more mystic fervour, to that Platonic and Miltonic doctrine which had already been propounded by the Elder Brother (see lines 420-475)"

782. sun-clad power of chastity. With 'sun clad' compare 'the sacred rays of chastity,' l. 425. Similarly in the *Faerie Queene*, in 6, Spenser says of Belphebe, who represents Chastity, "And Phoebus with fair beams did her adorn"

783 yet to what end? A rhetorical question, = it would be to no purpose.

784 nor nor. These correlatives are often used in poetry for *neither* *nor* (Shakespeare often omitting the former altogether), and are equally correct. *Nor* is only a contraction of *neither*, and the first may as well be contracted as the second

785 sublime notion and high mystery. In the *Apology for Smectymnua* Milton tells of his study of the "divine volume of Plato," wherein he learned of the "abstracted sublimities" of Chastity and Love also of his study of the Holy Scripture "unfolding these chaste and high mysteries, with timeless care infused, that the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body"

790 *dear wit* 'Dear' is here used in contempt its original sense is 'precious' (A S *deore*), but in Elizabethan English it has a variety of meanings, e.g. intense, serious, grievous, great, etc. Comp "sad occasion dear," *Lyc* 6, "dear groans," *L L* v 2 874 Craik suggests "that the notion properly involved in it of love, having first become generalised into that of a strong affection of any kind, had thence passed on to that of such an emotion the very reverse of love," as in my *dearest* foe gay rhetoric here so named in contempt, as being the instrument of sophistry

791 *fence, argumentation* *Fence* is an abbreviation of *defence* comp "tongue fence" (Milton), "fencer in wits' school" (Fuller), *Much Ado*, v 1 75

794 *rapt spirits* 'Rapt' = enraptured, as if the mind or soul had been *carried out of itself* (Lat *raptus*, seized) comp *Il Pens* 40, "Thy *rapt* soul sitting in thine eyes" Milton also uses the word of the actual snatching away of a person "What accident hath *rapt* him from us," *Par Lost*, ii. 40

797 the brute Earth, etc., i.e. the senseless Earth would become sensible and assist me 'Brute' = Lat. *brutus*, dull, insensible comp Horace, *Odes*, i. 34 9, "*bruta tellus*"

800 She fables not she speaks truly This line is alliterative.

801 set off comp *Lyc*. 80, "set off to the world"

802 though not mortal sc. 'I am' shuddering dew The epithet is, by hypallage, transferred from the person to the dew or cold sweat which 'dips' or moistens his body

804 Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus, etc., in allusion to the *Titanomachia* or contest between Zeus and the Titans Zeus, having been provided with thunder and lightning by the Cyclops, cast the Titans into Tartarus or Erebus, a region as far below Hell as Heaven is above the Earth The leader of the Titans was Cronos (Saturn) There is a zeugma in *speaks* as applied to 'thunder' and 'chains,' unless it be taken as in both cases equivalent to *denounces*

806 Come, no more! Comus now addresses the lady

808 canon laws of our foundation, i.e. the established rules of our society "A humorous application of the language of universities and other foundations" (Keightley)

809 'tis but the lees, etc. *Lees* and *settlings* are synonymous = *drregs* The allusion is to the old physiological system of the four primary humours of the body, viz. blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy (see Burton's *Anat of Mel* i. 1, § ii 2) "Melancholy, cold and dry, thick, black, and sour, begotten of the more feculent part of nourishment, and purged from the spleen", Gk. μελαγχολία, black bile See Sams *Ajón* 600, "humours black

That mingle with thy fancy", and Nash's *Terrors of the Night* (1594) "(Melancholy) sunketh down to the bottom like the lees of the wine, corrupteth the blood, and is the cause of lunacy"

811 straight, immediately The adverb *straight* is now chiefly used of direction, to indicate time *straightway* (= in a straight way) is more usual comp *L'Alleg* 69 "Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures"

814 scape, a mutilated form of 'escape,' occurs both as a noun and a verb in Shakespeare and Milton see *Par Lost*, v 5, "what can *scape* the eye of God?", *Par Reg* ii 189, "then lay'st thy *scapes* on names adored"

816 without his rod reversed This use of the participle is a Latinism see note, l 48 At the same time it is to be noted that a phrase of this kind introduced by 'without' is in Latin frequently rendered by the ablative absolute such construction is here inadmissible because 'without' also governs 'mutter's'

817 backward mutters The notion of a counter charm produced by reversing the magical wand and by repeating the charm backwards occurs in Ovid (*Met* vii 300), who describes Circe as thus restoring the followers of Ulysses to their human forms Milton skilfully makes the neglect of the counter charm the occasion for introducing the legend of Sabrina, which was likely to interest an audience assembled in the neighbourhood of the River Severn On 'mutter's' see note, l 526

820 bothink me The pronoun after this verb is reflexive. "The deliverance of their sister would be impossible but for supernatural interposition, the aid afforded by the Attendant Spirit from Jove's court In other words, Divine Providence is asserted Not without higher than human aid is the Lady rescued, and through the weakness of the mortal instruments of divine grace but half the intended work is accomplished" Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies*

821 In this line and the next the attributive clauses are separated from the antecedent see note, l 2

822 Melibœus The name of a shepherd in Virgil's *Ecloque* 1 Possibly the poet Spenser is here meant, as the tale of Sabrina is given in the *Faerie Queene*, ii 10, 14 The tale is also told by Geoffrey of Monmouth and by Sackville, Drayton and Warner As Milton refers to a 'shepherd,' i.e. a poet, and to 'the soothest shepherd' i.e. the truest poet, and as he follows Spenser's version of the story in this poem, we need not hesitate to identify Melibœus with Spenser

823 soothest, truest The A S *soth* meant *true*, hence also 'a true thing' = truth It survives in *soothe* (lit to affirm to be true), *soothway* (see l 874), and *forsooth* (= for a truth)

824 from hence *Hence* represents an A S word *heonan*, an being a suffix = from so that in the phrase 'from hence' the force of the preposition is twice introduced Yet the idiom is common it arises from forgetfulness of the origin of the word Comp *Arc* 3 "which we *from hence* descry"

825 with moist curb sways comp l 18 *Sabrina* was a *numen fluminis* or river deity

826 *Sabrina* The following is Milton's version of the legend—"After this, Brutus, in a chosen place, builds Troja Nova, changed in time to Trinovantum, now London, and began to enact laws (Heli being then High Priest in Judea), and, having governed the whole isle twenty-four years, died, and was buried in his new Troy His three sons—Locrine, Albanact, and Camber—divide the land by consent Locrine had the middle part, Loëgria, Camber possessed Cambria or Wales, Albanact, Albania, now Scotland But he, in the end, by Humber, King of the Huns, who, with a fleet, invaded that land, was slain in fight, and his people driven back into Loëgria Locrine and his brother go out against Humber, who now marching onward was by them defeated, and in a river drowned, which to this day retains his name Among the spoils of his camp and navy were found certain young maids, and Estrilidis, above the rest, passing fair, the daughter of a king in Germany, from whence Humber, as he went wasting the sea-coast, had led her captive, whom Locrine, though before contracted to the daughter of Corineus, resolves to marry But being forced and threatened by Corineus, whose authority and power he feared, Gwendolen the daughter he yields to marry, but in secret loves the other, and, oftentimes retiring as to some sacrifice, through vaults and passages made underground, and seven years thus enjoying her, had by her a daughter equally fair, whose name was Sabra. But when once his fear was off by the death of Corineus, not content with secret enjoyment, divorcing Gwendolen, he makes Estrilidis his Queen Gwendolen, all in rage, departs into Cornwall, where Pladan, the son she had by Locrine, was hitherto brought up by Corineus, his grandfather, and gathering an army of her father's friends and subjects, gives battle to her husband by the river Sture, wherein Locrine, shot with an arrow, ends his life But not so ends the fury of Gwendolen, for Estrilidis and her daughter Sabra she throws into a river, and, to have a monument of revenge, proclaims that the stream be thenceforth called after the damsel's name, which by length of time is changed now to *Sabrina* or Severn"—*History of Britain* (1670)

827 *Whilom*, of old An obsolete word, lit 'at time', A S *hwilum*, instr or dat plur of *hwil*, time

830 *step* dame For the actual relationship, see note, l 826 The prefix *step* (A S *steóp*) means 'orphaned,' and applies pro

perly to a child whose parent has re married it was afterwards used in the words 'step-father,' etc. *Dame* (Fr *dame*, a lady) retains the sense of mother in the form *dam*

832. his = its see note, l. 96

834. pearled wrists, wrists adorned with pearls An appropriate epithet, as pearls were said to exist in the waters of the Severn

835. aged Nereus' hall, the abode of old Nereus, i.e. the bottom of the sea Nereus, the father of the Nereids, or sea nymphs, is described as the wise and unerring old man of the sea, in Virgil, *grandaeus Nereus*. See also, l. 871, and compare Jonson's *Neptune's Triumph*, last song "Old Nereus, with his fifty girls, From aged Indus laden home with pearls"

836. piteous of, i.e. full of pity for, comp. Lat. *miseret te aliorum* (genitive) Milton occasionally uses the word in this passive sense, its active sense is 'causing pity,' i.e. pitiful Comp. Abbott, § 3 reared her lank head, i.e. raised up her drooping head comp. *Far Lest*, viii "In adoration at his feet I fell Submiss he reared me." 'Lank,' lit slender, hence weak The adjective *lanky* is in common use = tall and thin

837. imbathe, to bathe in the force of the preposition being reduplicated, as in Lat. *incidere in*

838. nectared lavers, etc., baths sweetened with nectar and scented with asphodel flowers On 'nectar,' see note, l. 479 asphodel, the same, both name and thing, as 'daffodil' (see *Lyc* 150, where it takes the form 'daffadillies') Gk. *ασφodelος*, M.E. *affodille*. The initial *d* in daffodil has not been satisfactorily explained see l. 851

839. the porch So Quintilian calls the ear the vestibule of the mind comp. *Hamlet* i. 5. 63 "the porches of mine ear", also the phrase, "the five gateways of knowledge"

840. ambrosial oils, oils of heavenly fragrance see note, l. 16, and compare Virgil's use of *ambrosia* in *Georg.* iv. 415, *liquidum ambrosiae diffundit odorem*

841. quick immortal change comp. l. 10

842. Made Goddess, etc. This participial construction is frequent in Milton as in Latin it is equivalent to an explanatory clause

844. twilight meadows comp. "twilight groves," *Il Pens* 133, "twilight ranks," *Arc* 99, *Hymn Nat* 188

845. Helping all urchin blasts, remedying or preventing the blighting influence of evil spirits 'Urchin blasts' is probably here used generally for what in *Arcades* 1953, are called "noisome winds and blasting vapours chill," 'urchin' being

common in the sense of 'goblin' (*M W of W* iv 4 49) Strictly the word denotes the hedgehog, which for various reasons was popularly regarded with great dread, and hence mischievous spirits were supposed to assume its form comp Shakespeare, *Temp* i 2 326, ii 2 5, "Fright me with *urchin*-shows", *Titus And* ii 3 101, *Macbeth*, iv 1 2, "Thrice and once the *hedge pig* whined," etc Compare the protecting duties of the Genius in *Arcades* Helping comp the phrases, "I cannot *help* it," : e prevent it, "it cannot be *helped*," : e remedied, etc.

846 *shrewd* Here used in its radical sense = *shrew ed*, malicious, like a shrew Comp *M N D* ii 1, "That *shrewd* and knavish sprite called Robin Goodfellow" Chaucer has the verb *shrew* = to curse, the current verb is *beshrew*

847 *vial*ed, contained in *phials*

850 *garland wreaths* A garland is a wreath, but we may take the phrase to mean 'wreathed garlands' comp "twisted braids," l. 862.

852 *old swain*, : e Meliboeus (l. 822) "But neither Geoffrey of Monmouth nor Spenser has the development of the legend" (Masson)

853 *clasping charm* see l. 613, 660

854 *warbled song* comp *Arc* 87, "touch the *warbled* string", *Son* xx 12, "*Warble* immortal notes"

857 *This will I try*, : e to invoke her rightly in song

858 *adjuring*, charging by something sacred and venerable The adjuration is contained in lines 867 889, which, in Milton's MS, are directed "to be said," not sung, and in the Bridgewater MS "to sing or not" From the latter MS it would appear that these lines were sung as a kind of trio by Lawes and the two brothers.

863 *amber dropping* see note, l. 333, and comp l. 106, where the idea is similar, warranting us in taking 'amber dropping' as a compound epithet = dropping amber, and not (as some read) 'amber' and 'dropping' *Amber* conveys the ideas of luminous clearness and fragrance see *Sams Agon* 720, "*amber* scent of odorous perfume"

865 *silver lake*, the Severn Virgil has the Lat *lacus* in the sense of 'a river'

868 *great Oceanus*, Gk 'Οκέανόν τε μέγαν The early Greeks regarded the earth as a flat disc, surrounded by a perpetually flowing river called Oceanus the god of this river was also called Oceanus, and afterwards the name was applied to the Atlantic Hesiod, Drayton, and Jonson have all applied the epithet 'great' to the god Oceanus, in fact, throughout these

lines Milton uses what may be called the "permanent epithets" of the various divinities

869 earth shaking Neptune's mace, i.e. the trident of Poseidon (Neptune) Homer calls him *ἐννοσίγαιος* = earth shaking comp *Iliad*, xii 27, "And the Shaker of the Earth with his trident in his hands," etc. In *Par Lost*, x 294, Milton provides Death with a "mace petrified."

870 Tethys' pace Tethys, wife of Oceanus, their children being the Oceanides and river gods In Hesiod she is 'the venerable' (*πρόνια Τήθυσ*), and in Ovid 'the hoary'

871 hoary Nereus see note, l 835

872. Carpathian wizard's hook. See Virgil's *Georg* iv 387, "In the sea god's Carpathian gulf there lives a seer, Proteus, of the sea's own hue all things are known to him, those which are, those which have been, and those which drag their length through the advancing future" Wizard = diviner, without the depreciatory sense of line 571, see note there Hook Proteus had a shepherd's hook, because he tended "the monstrous herds of loathly sea calves" *Odyssey*, iv 385 463

873 scaly Triton's shell. In *Lycidas*, 89, he is "the Herald of the Sea" He bore a 'wreathed horn' or shell which he blew at the command of Neptune in order to still the restless waves of the sea He was 'scaly,' the lower part of his body being like that of a fish

874 soothsaying Glaucus He was a Boeotian fisherman who had been changed into a marine deity, and was regarded by fishermen and sailors as a soothsayer or oracle see note, l 823

875 Leucothea lit "the white goddess" (Gk *λευκή, θεά*), the name by which Ino, the daughter of Cadmus, was worshipped after she had thrown herself into the sea to avoid her enraged husband Athamas

876 her son, i.e. Melisertes, drowned and deified along with his mother as a sea deity he was called Palaemon, identified by the Romans with their god of harbours, Portumnus

877 tinsel slippered The 'permanent epithet' of Thetis, a daughter of Nereus and mother of Achilles, is "silver footed" (Gk *ἀργυροπόδα*) Comp *Neptune's Triumph* (Jonson)

"And all the silver footed nymphs were drest
To wait upon him, to the Ocean's feast"

'Tinsel slippered' is a paraphrase of this, for 'tinsel' is a cloth worked with silver (or gold) the notion of cheap finery is not radical Etymologically, *tinsel* is that which glitters or *scintillates* On the beauty of this epithet, and of Milton's compound epithets generally, see Trench, *English Past and Present*, p 296

878 80 Sirens Parthenopè's Ligea's The three Sirens (see note, 1 253) were Parthenopè, Ligèa, and Lucosia The tomb of the first was at Naples (see Milton's *Ad Leonaram*, iii, "Credula quid liquidam Sirena, Neapoli, iactas, Olaraque Parthenopes fana Acheloidados," etc) Ligen, described by Virgil (*Georg* iv 336) as a sea nymph, is here represented as seated, like a mermaid, in the act of smoothing her hair with a golden comb

881 Wherewith=with which The true adjective clause is "sleeking locks" = with which she sleeks, etc, and the true participial clause is "she sits rocks" = seated on rocks.

882 Sleeking, making sleek or glossy The original sense of 'sleek' is greasy comp *Lyc* 99, "On the level brine *Sleek* Panopè with all her sisters played"

885 heave, raise Comp the similar use of the word in *L'Alleg* 145, "Orpheus' self may heave his head"

887 bridle in, i.e. restrain

888 have subjunctive after *till*, as frequently in Milton

890 rushy fringed, fringed with rushes The more usual form would be ~~rush fringed~~ we may regard Milton's form as a participle formed from the compound noun "rushy fringe" comp 'blue haired,' 1 29, "false played," Shakespeare, *A and C* iv 14

891 grows A singular with two nominatives connected by *and* the verb is to be taken with each But the compound subject is really equivalent to "the willow with its osiers dank," osiers being water willows or their branches dank, damp comp *Par Lost*, vii 441, "oft they quit the *dank*" (=the water)

893 Thick set, etc., i.e. thickly inland with agate and beautified with the azure sheen of turquoise, etc There is a zougma in *set* *azurn* *sheen*. Sheen = brightness it occurs again in 1 1003, see note there. 'Azurn' modern English has a tendency to use the noun itself as an adjective in cases where older English used an adjective with the suffix *en*=made of Most of the adjectives in *en* that still survive do not now denote "made of," but simply "like," e.g. golden hair, etc *Azurn* and *cedarn* (1 990), *hornen*, *treen*, *corden*, *glassen*, *reedan*, etc, are practically obsolete, see Trench, *English Past and Present* Comp 'oaten' (*Lyc* 33), 'oaken' (*Arc* 45) As the words 'azurn' and 'cedarn' are peculiar to Milton some hold that he adopted them from the Italian *azzurino* and *cedrino*

894 turkis, also spelt turkoise, turquois, and turquoise lit 'the Turkish stone,' a Persian gem so called because it came through Turkey (Pers *turk*, a Turk)

895 That strays Milton does ~~not imply~~ that these stones

were found in the Severn, nor does he in lines 932-937 imply that cinnamon grows on its banks.

897 printless feet. Comp *Temp* v. 1. 34 "Ye that on the sands with *printless* foot Do chase the ebbing Neptune"; also *Arc* 85 "Where no print of step hath been."

902 It will be noticed that the Spirit takes up the rhymes of Sabrina's song ('here,' 'dear', 'request,' 'distressed'), and again Sabrina continues the rhymes of the Spirit's song ('distressed,' 'best')

913 of precious cure, of curative power See note on this use of 'of,' l. 155

914 References to the efficacy of sprinkling are frequent, e.g. in the English Bible, in Spenser, in Virgil (*Aen* vi. 229), in Ovid (*Met* iv. 479), in *Par Lost*, xi. 416

916 Next an adverb modifying 'touch.'

917 glutinous, sticky, viscous The epithet is transferred from the effect to the cause

921 Amphitrite the wife of Neptune (Poseidon) and goddess of the Sea.

923 Anchises line see note, l. 827 Loecine was the son of Brutus, who was the son of Silvius, who was the grandson of the great Aeneas, who was the son of old Anchises

924 may miss. This verb is optative so are '(may) scorch,' '(may) fill,' 'may roll,' and 'may be crowned'

925 brimmed. The passive participle is so often used where we now use the active that 'brimmed' may mean 'brimming' = full to the brim. On the other hand, 'brim' is frequent in the sense of *bank* (comp. l. 119), so that some regard 'brimmed' as = enclosed within banks

928 singèd, scorched. We should rather say 'scorching'
On the good wishes expressed in lines 924-937 Masson's comment is "The whole of this poetic blessing on the Severn and its neighbourhood, involving the wish of what we should call 'solid commercial prosperity,' would go to the heart of the assemblage at Ludlow"

933 beryl in the Bible (*Rev* xxi. 20) this precious stone forms one of the foundations of the New Jerusalem. The word is of Eastern origin comp. Arab *billaur*, crystal golden ore. As a matter of fact gold has been found in the Welsh mountains

934 May thy lofty head etc. The grammatical construction is 'May thy lofty head be crowned round with many a tower and terrace, and here and there (may thy lofty head be crowned) with groves of myrrh and cinnamon (growing) upon thy banks.' This makes 'banks' objective, and 'upon' a preposition the only

objection to this reading is that the notion of crowning the head upon the banks is peculiar. The difficulty vanishes when we recollect that Milton frequently connects two clauses with one subject rather loosely. the subject of the second clause is 'thou,' implied in 'thy lofty head'. An exact parallel to this is found in *L'Alleg* 121, 122 'whose bright eyes *rain* influence and *judge* the prize', also in *Il Pens* 155 7, 'let my due feet never fail to *walk* and love, etc.' also in *Lyc* 88, 89. The explanation adopted by Prof. Masson is that Milton had in view two Greek verbs—*ἐπιστεφανῶ*, 'to put a crown round,' and *ἐπιστεφανῶ*, "to put a crown upon" thus, "May thy lofty head be *crowned* round with many a tower and terrace, and thy banks here and there be *crowned* upon with groves of myrrh and cinnamon." This makes 'banks' nominative, and 'upon' an adverb.

In the Bridgewater MS. the stage direction here is, *Song ends*

942 Not a waste, etc., i.e. 'Let there not be a superfluous or unnecessary sound until we come' 'waste' is an attributive see note, l. 728

945 gloomy covert wide see note, l. 207

946 not many furlongs. These words are deliberately inserted to keep up the illusion. It is probable that, in the actual representation of the mask, the scene representing the enchanted palace was removed when Comus's rout was driven off the stage, and a woodland scene redisplayed. This would give additional significance to these lines and to the change of scene after l. 957. 'Furlong' = furrow long. it thus came to mean the length of a field, and is now a measure of length. $\frac{1}{2}$ a furlong = 100 yds.

949 many a friend. 'Many a' is a peculiar idiom, which has been explained in different ways. One view is that 'many' is a corruption of the French *mesme*, a train or company, and 'a' a corruption of the preposition 'of,' the singular noun being then substituted for the plural through confusion of the preposition with the article. A more correct view seems to be that 'many' is the A.S. *manig*, which was in old English used with a singular noun and without the article, e.g. *manig mann* = many men. In the thirteenth century the indefinite article began to be inserted, thus *mony enne thing* = many a thing, just as we say 'what a thing,' 'such a thing'. This would seem to show that 'a' is not a corruption of 'of,' and that there is no connection with the French word *mesme*. Milton, in this passage, uses 'many a friend' with a plural verb *gratulate*. The simple verb is now replaced by the compound *congratulate* (Lat. *gratulari*, to wish joy to a person).

950 wished, i.e. wished for, see note, l. 574 and beside, i.e. 'and where, besides,' etc.

952 jigs, lively dances.

958 Back, shepherds, back! On the rising of the curtain, the stage is occupied by peasants engaged in a merry dance. Soon after the attendant Spirit enters with the above words. Enough your play, i.e. we have had enough of your dancing, which must now give way to 'other trippings'.

959 sunshine holiday. Comp *L'Alleg* 98, where the same expression is used. There is a close resemblance between the language of this song and lines 91-99 of *L'Allegro*. Milton's own spelling of 'holiday' is 'holyday,' which shows the origin of the word. The accent in such compounds (comp. blue bell, blackbird etc.) falls on the adjective. It is only in this way that the ear can tell whether the compound forms (e.g. holiday) or the separate words (e.g. holy day) are being used.

960 Here be see note, l. 12. without duck or nod. words used to describe the ungraceful dancing and awkward courtesy of the country people.

961 trippings lighter toes court guise. words used to describe the graceful movements of the Lady and her brothers. comp. *L'Alleg* 33. "trip it, as you go, On the light fantastic toe." *Trod* (or trodden), past participle of *tread*. 'to tread a measure' is a common expression, meaning 'to dance'. 'Court guise,' i.e. courtly mien, *guise* is a doublet of *wise* = way, e.g. 'in this wise,' 'likewise,' 'otherwise'. In such pairs of words as *guise* and *wise*, *guard* and *ward*, *guile* and *wile*, the forms in *gu* have come into English through the French.

963 Mercury (the Greek Hermes) was the herald of the gods, and as such was represented as having winged ankles (Gk. *πτηροπόδης*) his name is here used as a synonym both for agility and refinement.

964 mincing Dryades. The Dryades are wood nymphs (Gk. *δρῦς*, a tree), here represented as mincing, i.e. tripping with short steps, unlike the clumsy striding of the country people. Comp. *Merch. of V* iii. 4. 67. "turn two mincing steps Into a manly stride." Applied to a person's gait (or speech), the word now implies affectation.

965 lawns. leas. On 'lawn,' see note, l. 568. a 'lea' is a meadow.

966 This song is sung by Lawes while presenting the three young persons to the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater.

967 ye see note, l. 216.

968 so goodly grown, i.e. grown so goodly. *Goodly* = handsome (A.S. *gōðlic* = goodlike).

970 timely. Here an adverb. In l. 689 it is an adjective. Comp. the two phrases in *Macbeth*. "To gain the *timely* inn," II. 3. 7, and "To call *timely* on him," II. 3. 51.

972 assays, trials, temptations *Assay* is used by Milton in the sense of 'attempt' as well as of 'trial' see *Arc.* 80, "I will, *assay*, her worth to celebrate" The former meaning is now confined to the form *essay* (radically the same word), and the use of *assay* has been still further restricted from its being used chiefly of the testing of metals *Comp Par Lost*, iv 932, "hard *assays* and ill successes", *Par Reg* i 264, iv 478

974, 5 To triumph The whole purpose of the poem is succinctly expressed in these lines *Stage Direction* Spirit epiloguizes, i.e. sings the epilogue or concluding stanzas In one of Lawes' manuscripts of the mask, the epilogue consists of twelve lines only, those numbered 1012 1023 From the same copy we find that line 976 had been altered by Lawes in such a manner as to convert the first part of the epilogue into a prologue which, in his character as Attendant Spirit, he sang whilst descending upon the stage —

*From the heavens now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad field of the sky
There I suck the liquid air
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree
There eternal summer dwells,
And west winds, with musky wing,
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purpled scarf can show,
Yellow, watchet, green, and blue,
And drenches oft with Manna dew
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where many a cherub soft reposes.*

Doubtless this was the arrangement in the actual performance of the mask

976 To the ocean, etc. The resemblance of this song, in rhythm and rhyme, to the song of Ariel in the *Tempest*, v 1 88 94, has been frequently pointed out "Where the bee sucks, there suck I," etc Compare also the song of Johphiel in *The Fortunate Isles* (Ben Jonson) "Like a lightning from the sky," etc The epilogue as sung by Lawes (ll 1012 1023) may also be compared with the epilogue of the *Tempest* "Now my charms are all o'erthrown," etc

977 happy climes. Comp *Odyssey*, iv 566 "The deathless gods will convey thee to the Elysian plain and the world's end where life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor yet great storm, nor any ruin, but always ocean sendeth forth the breeze of the shrill west to blow cool on men" see also l 14 'Clime,' radically the same as *climate*, is still used in its literal sense = a region of the earth, while 'climate' has the secondary meaning of 'atmospheric conditions.' Comp *Son* viii. 8 "Whatever *clime* the sun's bright circle warms."

978 day eye Comp *Son* i. 5 "the eye of day", and *Lyc.* 26 "the opening *eyelids* of the Morn."

979 broad fields of the sky Comp Virgil's "*Æris incampis latis*," *Aen* vi 888

980 suck the liquid air, inhale the pure air 'Liquid' (lit flowing) is used figuratively and generally in the sense of pure and sweet comp *Son* i 5, "thy liquid notes"

981 All amidst For this adverbial use of *all* (here modifying the following prepositional phrase), compare *Il Pens* 33, "*all* in a robe of darkest grain"

982 Hesperus see note, l 393 Hesperus, the brother of Atlas, had three daughters—Aegle, Cynthia, and Hesperia. They were famed for their sweet song In Milton's MS *Hesperus* is written over *Atlas* Spenser makes them daughters of Atlas, as does Jonson in *Pleasure reconciled to Virtue*.

984 crisped shades 'Crisped,' like 'curled' (comp "curl the grove," *Arc.* 46) is a common expression in the poetry of the time, and has the same meaning The original form is the adjective 'crisp' (Lat *crispus*=curled), from which comes the verb *to crisp* and the participle *crisped* Compare "the *crisped* brooks ran nectar," *Par Lost*, iv 237, where the word is best rendered 'rippled', also Tennyson's *Claribel*, 19, "the babbling runnel *crispeth*." In the present case the reference is to the foliage of the trees

985 spruce, gay This word, now applied to persons with a touch of levity, was formerly used both of things and persons in the sense of gay or neat Compare the present and earlier uses of the word *jolly*, on which Pattison says — "This is an instance of the disadvantage under which poetry in a living language labours No knowledge of the meaning which a word bore in 1631 can wholly banish the later and vulgar associations which may have gathered round it since. Apart from direct parody and burlesque, the tendency of living speech is gradually to degrade the noble, so that as time goes on the range of poetical expression grows from generation to generation more and more restricted." The origin of the word *spruce* is disputed Skeat holds that it is a corruption of *Pruce* (old Fr *Pruce*, mod. Fr

Prusse) = Prussia, we read in the 14th century of persons dressed after the fashion of Prussia or Spruce, and Prussia was called Sprussia by some English writers up to the beginning of the 17th century. See also Trench, *Select Glossary*

986 *The Graces* The three Graces of classical mythology were Euphrosyne (the light-hearted one), Aglaur (the bright one), and Thalia (the blooming one). See *L'Alleg* 12 "Euphrosyne

Whom lovely Venus, at a birth, With two sister Graces more, To ivy crownèd Bacchus bore" They were sometimes represented as daughters of Zeus, and as the goddesses who purified and enhanced all the innocent pleasures of life. *rosy bosomed Hours* The Hours (Horæ) of classical mythology were the goddesses of the Seasons, whose course was described as the dance of the Horæ. The Hora of Spring accompanied Persephone every year on her ascent from the lower world, and the expression "The chamber of the Horæ opens" is equivalent to "The Spring is coming." 'Rosy bosomed', the Gk *ροδόκοιπος* compare the epithets 'rosy fingered' (applied by Homer to the dawn), 'rosy-armed,' etc

989 *musky fling* Compare *Par Lost*, viii 515 "Fresh gales and gentle airs Whisped it to the woods, and from their wings Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub" In this passage the verb *fling* is similarly used. 'Musky' = fragrant comp 'musk-rose,' l 496

990 *cedarn alleys*, i.e. alleys of cedar trees For 'alley,' comp l 311 For the form of 'cedarn,' see note on 'azurn,' l 893 Tennyson uses the word 'cedarn' in *Recoll of Arab Nights*, 115

991 *Nard and cassia*, two aromatic plants Cassia is a name sometimes applied to the wild cinnamon nard is also called *spike-nard*, see allusion in the Bible, *Mark*, xiv 3, *Exod xxx*. 24, etc

992 *Iris humid bow* see note, l 83 The allusion is, of course, to the rainbow

993 *blow*, here used actively = cause to blossom comp Jonson, *Maske at Highgate*, "For thee, Favonius, here shall *blow* New flowers"

995 *purpled* = having an embroidered edge (O F *pourfiler*) the verb *to purple* survives in the contracted form *to purl*, and is cognate with *profile* = a front line or edge *shew* here rhymes with *dew*, comp l 511, 512 This points to the fact that in Milton's time the present pronunciation of *shew*, though familiar, was not the only one recognised.

996 *drenches with Elysian dew*, i.e. soaks with heavenly dew The Homeric *Elysium* is described in *Odyssey*, iv see note,

1 977, it was afterwards identified with the abode of the blessed,
 1 257 ~~*Diench* is the causative of *drink*~~ here the nominative
 of the verb is 'Iris' and the object 'beds'

997 if your ears be true, i.e. if your ears be pure the poet is
 about to speak of that which cannot be understood by those with
 "gross unpurged ear" (*Arc* 73, and *Com* l. 458) He alludes to
 that pure Love which "leads up to Heaven," *Par Lost*, viii 612.

998 hyacinth. This is the "sanguine flower inscribed with
 woe" of *Lucidas*, 106 it sprang from the blood of Hyacinthus, a
 youth beloved by Apollo

999 Adonis, the beloved of Venus, died of a wound which he
 received from a boar during the chase The grief of Venus was
 so great that the gods of the lower world allowed him to spend
 six months of every year on earth The story is of Asiatic
 origin, and is supposed to be symbolic of the revival of nature in
 spring and its death in winter Comp *Par Lost*, ix. 439,
 "those gardens feigned Or of revived Adonis," etc

1000 waxing well of, i.e. recovering from The A S *weaxan*
 = to grow or increase Shakespeare has 'man of wax' = adult,
Rom and Jul 1 3 76, see also Index to *Globe Shakespeare*

1002 Assyrian queen, i.e. Venus whose worship came from
 the East, probably from Assyria She was originally identical
 with Astarte, called by the Hebrews Ashteroth see *Par. Lost*,
 1 438-452, where Adonis appears as Thammuz.

1003, 4 far above advanced. These words are to be read
 together 'advanced' is an attribute to 'Cupid,' and is modified
 by 'far above'

1003 spangled sheen, glittering brightness 'Spangled'
 spangle is a diminutive of *spang* = a metal clasp, and hence 'a
 shining ornament' In poetry it is common to speak of the stars
 as 'spangles' and of the heavens as 'spangled' comp Addison's
 well known lines

"The spacious firmament on high,
 With all the blue ethereal sky,
 And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
 Their great Original proclaim"

Comp also *Lyc* 170, "with new spangled ore" '*Sheen*' is
 here used as a noun, as in line 893, also in *Hymn Nat* 145,
 "throned in celestial sheen" *Epitaph on M of W* 73, "clad
 in radiant sheen" The word occurs in Spenser as an adjective
 also comp "her dainty corse so fair and sheen," *F Q* ii 1 10
 In the line "By fountain clear or spangled starlight sheen"
 (*M N D* ii 1 29) it is doubtful whether the word is a noun
 or an adjective Milton uses the adjective *sheeny* (*Death of*
Fair Infant, 48)

1004 **Celestial Cupid.** The ordinary view of Cupid is given in the note to line 445, here he is the lover of Psyche (the human soul) to whom he is united after she has been purified by a life of trial and misfortune. The myth of Cupid and Psyche is as follows. Cupid was in love with Psyche, but warned her that she must not seek to know who he was. Yielding to curiosity, however, she drew near to him with a lamp while he was asleep. A drop of the hot oil falling on him, he awoke, and fled from her. She now wandered from place to place, persecuted by Venus, but after great sorrow, during which she was secretly supported by Cupid, she became immortal and was united to him for ever. In this story Psyche represents the human soul (Gk *ψυχή*), which is disciplined and purified by earthly misfortune and so fitted for the enjoyment of true happiness in heaven. Further, in Milton's *Allegory* it is only the soul so purified that is capable of knowing true love. In his *Apology for Smectymnuus* he calls it that Love "whose charming cup is only virtue," and whose "first and chiefest office begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, Knowledge and Virtue." To this high and mystical love Milton again alludes in *Eptaphium Damonis*.

"In other part, the expansive vault above,
And there too, even there the god of love,
With quiver armed he mounts, his torch displays
A vivid light, his gem-tipt arrows blaze,
Around his bright and fiery eyes he rolls,
Nor aims at vulgar minds or little souls,
Nor deigns one look below, but aiming high
Sends every arrow to the lofty sky,
Hence forms divine, and minds immortal, learn
The power of Cupid, and enamoured burn."

Cowper's translation

1007 among preposition governing 'gods.'

1008 make subjunctive after 'till' Its nominative is 'consent'

1010 blissful, blest *Bliss* is cognate with *bless* and *blithe*. Comp "the *best* kingdoms meek of joy and love," *Lyc* 177 are to be born. There seems to be here a confusion of constructions between the subjunctive co-ordinate with *make* and the indicative dependent in meaning on "Jove hath sworn" in the following line.

1011 Youth and Joy Everlasting youth and joy are found only after the trials of earth are past. So Spenser makes Pleasure the daughter of Cupid and Psyche, but she is "the daughter late" i.e. she is possible only to the purified soul. See also note on l. 1004.

1012. *my task*, i.e. the task alluded to in line 18 This line is an adverbial clause = Now that (or *because*) my task is smoothly done

1013 The Spirit's task being finished he is free to soar where he pleases There seems to be implied the injunction that mankind can by virtue alone attain to the same spiritual freedom

1014 *green earth's end* The world as known to the ancients did not extend much beyond the Straits of Gibraltar The Cape Verd Islands, which lie outside these straits, may be here referred to comp *Par Lost*, viii 630

"But I can now no more, the parting sun
Beyond the earth's green Cape and Vordant Isles
Hesperian sets, my signal to depart"

1015 *bowed welkin* the meaning of the line is, "Where the arched sky curves slowly towards the horizon." *Welkin* is, radically, "the region of clouds," A S *wolcnu*, clouds

1017 *corners of the moon*, i.e. its horns The crescent moon is said to be 'horned' (Lat *cornu*, a horn) Comp the lines in *Macbeth*, iii. 5 23, 24 "Upon the corners of the moon There hangs a vaporous drop profound"

1020 She can *teach* ye how to climb, etc Compare Jonson's song to Virtue

"Though a stranger here on earth
In heaven she hath her right of birth
There, there is Virtue's seat
Strive to keep her your own,
'Tis only she can make you great,
Though place here make you known."

1021 *sphery chime* i.e. the music of the spheres "To climb higher than the sphery chime" means to ascend beyond the spheres into the *empyrean* or true heaven—the abode of God and the purest Spirits Milton therefore implies that by virtue alone can we come into God's presence See note on "the starry quire," line 112. 'Chime' is strictly 'harmony,' as in 'silver chime,' *Hymn Nat* 128 the word is cognate with *cymbal*

1022, 3 *if Virtue feeble were*, etc. A triumphant expression of that confidence in the invincibility of virtue, when aided by Divine Providence, and therefore a fitting conclusion of the whole masque Milton's whole life reveals his unshaken belief in the truth expressed in the last two lines of his *Comus*

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